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## PENAL FORMATIONS DURING THE GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR

Penal formations first appeared in the Red Army during the Civil War. One of the first documents that became the basis for their creation can be considered Decree No. 262 of the Chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic (RVSR) L.D. Trotsky (Bronstein), sent on January 13, 1919 to the Revolutionary Military Council of the 9th Army. "In the Kamyshin group, the 1st Kamyshin Regiment fled from local natives, mostly kulaks," the order noted. "I have ordered the deserters to be extracted, searched for, and after punishing the most guilty, to form from the rest penal companies or a penal battalion, depending on the number. Experience has shown that such penal units made up of conditionally convicted deserters then fight bravely and even become primeon units. But it is necessary to transfer the indicated units from Kamyshin to another front. I consider it most expedient to transfer to the Balashov front, as the nearest one, so that you remove from here to the disposal of the Kamyshin commander the corresponding units, if possible, penal companies. Prev

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I'm planning to come to an agreement about this with the command of the Kamyshin group.

At the direction of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic, the All-Russian General Staff, which was headed by former General N.I. Rattel, developed the Regulations on penal units and the staff of a separate penal company. On June 3, 1919, Deputy Chairman of the RVSR E.M. Sklyansky signed Order No. 997, which stated:

"1. Approve and put into effect the Regulations on penal units and the staff of a separate penal company attached hereto.

2. The formation of penal companies to produce as needed.

3. In the area where the front-line units are located, the formation of penal companies is entrusted to the headquarters of the fronts by decree of the RVS of the fronts, in the internal military districts - to the district military commissariats.

4. In the variable composition of the penal companies, enroll servicemen convicted of this for criminal acts of a military nature, including desertion.

5. Introduce a special sign for deserters in penal units in the form of a black strip sewn on the left sleeve - 2 cm wide and 3 inches long.

The "Regulations on penal units" noted: "... In penal teams at units: a) military personnel are transferred by order of the heads and commissars of stage units for two short-term (no more than 6 days) unauthorized absences or for one, if any lasted more than the specified period and 6) those sentenced to this are appointed by the verdict of the judicial authorities"2?.

## Penal formations during the Great Patriotic War

By order of L.D. Trotsky penal units began to be formed in the reserve troops. "At the reserve battalion, a penal company can be organized for deserters and those guilty of more serious violations of discipline and duty," he noted in a telegram dated June 18 to the Revolutionary Military Council of the 14th Army of the Southern Front. "All units of the Red Army must be passed through the reserve battalions."

In October 1919, when the Northwestern Army of General N.N. Yudenich created a serious threat to Petrograd, L.D. Trotsky demanded that the command of the 7th Army and the Petrograd Fortified Region take decisive measures to restore order among the troops. "There must be a huge number of deserters in Petrograd who left their units," said his telegram No. 2818 dated October 18 to the commandant of the Petrograd fortified area D.N. Avrov. - It is necessary to organize in the city (so in the document. - Comp.) for the extraction of deserters with the involvement of a tribunal. Commanders, deserters and the most malicious are to be shot. Create penal teams from the rest and send them to the most dangerous places. From the barrage detachments, send cavalry along the highway to catch deserters.

The issue of combating desertion was repeatedly considered at meetings of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic, Revolutionary Military Councils of fronts and armies. The main reasons for desertion were the onset of cold weather, poor barracks life, shortcomings in the supply of food and uniforms, the proximity of places,

1 Cited. by: Krasnov V.G., Daines V.O. Unknown Trotsky. Red Bonaparte: Documents. Opinions. Reflections. - M.: OLMA-PRESS, 2000. S. 196 -197.

2 Quot. Quoted from: Military Historical Journal. 1989. No. 8. S. 56. 7

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from which military personnel were called. Revolutionary military tribunals were also involved in the fight against this evil, which, along with other measures of punishment, also applied such a measure as sending them to penal units. Thus, in the seven months of 1919, 95,000 deserters were convicted, of which more than half were sent to penal units, and 600 people were shot! In the second half of 1920, 8,521 people deserted on the Western Front, 6,086 of them were detained and voluntarily came. Of this number, 1,713 people were sent to spare parts, 1,666 to combat units, 132 to penal teams, 966 were put on trial, 105 were sentenced to death and 6 to conditional execution? All in all, in 1920, the revolutionary military tribunals considered cases of 106,966 people in court sessions, of which 15,380 (14.4%) were sent to penal companies and konilageriyaz.

Penal subdivisions and units during the Civil War were created not only in the active army. They were widely used as a labor force. For example, in telegram No. 1747 to the Revolutionary Military Council of the Western Front dated June 1, 1919, L.D. Trotsky wrote: "For engineering construction, penal teams from among the captured deserters should be widely used. I consider one of the most important tasks of the Western Front to be a good organization of the fight against desertion, the organization of good tribunals. Propose a military commissar (military commissar of the Western Front

1 See: Ovechkin V.V. Desertion from the Red Army during the Civil War // Questions of History. 2003. No. 3. P. 110.

2 RGVA. F. 104. Op. 1. D. 6. L. 261. 3 See: Military tribunals - judicial bodies in the Armed Forces of the USSR. 70 years of military tribunals. S. 37.

that. - Comp.) in the provinces under his jurisdiction to transfer convicted deserters in the form of work teams at the disposal of the front! Later, the practice of creating penal units and units was applied in the labor armies, which began to form in the early 1920s.

The experience of using penal companies and battalions during the Civil War found its application during the Great Patriotic War. Their creation was initiated by the order of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR I.V. Stalin No. 227 of July 28, 1942. The history of its appearance is as follows.

Back in March, when discussing the plan for the summer campaign, Chief of the General Staff Marshal B.M. Shaposhnikov made a proposal for the near future to confine ourselves to defense only. But, according to G.K. Zhukov, this proposal provoked a sharp reaction from Stalin, who objected: "We can't sit on the defensive with our hands folded and wait for the Germans to strike first! We ourselves need to deliver a series of pre-emptive strikes on a broad front and test the readiness of the enemy"<sup>2</sup>.

He was supported by the Commander-in-Chief of the South-Western Direction S.K. Timoshenko, who stated that the troops in this direction have every opportunity and, of course, must inflict a preemptive strike on the enemy and frustrate his offensive plans against the Southern and Southwestern fronts. Marshal of the Soviet Union K.E. Voroshilov, who believed that there were enough troops in the south to defeat the enemy.

1 RTSHIDNI. FO. 17. Op. 84. D. 45. L. 20. 2 Kondrashov I.K. Severe tests. S. 326.

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But as a result of the unsuccessful outcome of the Kharkov operation (May 12–29, 1942), the troops of the Southwestern Front, the 9th and 57th armies of the Southern Front irrevocably lost 170,958 people, and sanitary losses amounted to 106,232 people! The Kharkov tragedy dramatically complicated the entire strategic situation on the southern wing of the Soviet-German front. After it, the German command carried out another series of offensive operations with the aim of successively defeating the Soviet troops on the eastern bank of the river. Seversky Donets and west of the river. Oskol. And although the enemy failed to encircle the troops defending here, they were pushed back to the east, which created favorable conditions for subsequent strikes. From the second half of July, hostilities on the southern wing of the Soviet front resulted in two grandiose battles: the battle for Stalingrad and the battle for the Caucasus.

The entire Red Army was blamed for the failures, and the "alarmists" were blamed in its ranks. In fact, the true culprit of the failures was, first of all, the Supreme Commander-in-Chief I.V. Stalin, who, as in the summer of 1941, ignored the reports of military intelligence and the competent proposals of military professionals in determining the nature and methods of action of the Red Army in the upcoming campaign. The members of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command are also to blame, who failed to defend, and some of them did not intend to do so, their opinion before the Supreme Commander-in-Chief.

On July 28, 1942, Stalin signed Order No. 227, in which he demanded an end to the retreat, "stubbornly, to the last drop of blood, defend every position,

1 See: Russia and the USSR in the wars of the twentieth century: Statistical research. — M.: OLMA-PRESS, 2001. S. 311.

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every meter of Soviet territory, to cling to every piece of Soviet land and defend it to the last opportunity. The order emphasized: "Not a step back!" So now

should be our main call." Further, referring to the enemy, who, in order to restore discipline, formed more than 100 penal companies and about a dozen penal battalions, Stalin considered it necessary "to learn from our enemies in this matter, as our ancestors learned from enemies in the past and then won over them." in trouble. Based on this, the order required:

"1. To the military councils of the fronts, and above all to the commanders of the fronts:

a) to unconditionally liquidate the retreating moods among the troops and with an iron fist to suppress the propaganda that we can and must allegedly retreat further to the east, that there will be no supposed harm from such a retreat;

6) unconditionally remove them from their posts and send them to Headquarters to bring to court martial the commanders of the armies who allowed the unauthorized withdrawal of troops from their positions, without an order from the front command;

c) to form within the front from one to three (depending on the situation) penal battalions (800 people each), where to send medium and senior commanders and relevant political workers of all branches of the military who are guilty of violating discipline through cowardice or instability, and put them on more difficult sectors of the front in order to give them the opportunity to atone for their crimes against the Motherland.

2. To the military councils of the armies and, above all, to the commanders of the armies:

a) unconditionally remove from their posts the commanders and commissars of corps and divisions who allowed unauthorized withdrawal of troops from their positions without an order

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command of the army, and send them to the military council of the front to be brought before a military court ...

c) to form within the army from five to ten (depending on the situation) penal companies (from 150 to 200 people each), where to send ordinary soldiers and junior commanders who are guilty of violating discipline due to cowardice or instability, and put them in difficult areas of the army in order to give them the opportunity to atone for their crimes against the Motherland with blood ... "

Marshal of the Soviet Union A.M. Vasilevsky, assessing Order No. 227, wrote in his book "The Work of All Life": "This order immediately attracted the attention of the entire personnel of the Armed Forces. I was an eyewitness of how soldiers in units and subunits heard him, officers and generals studied him. Order No. 227 is one of the most powerful documents of the war years in terms of the depth of patriotic content and the degree of emotional intensity... I, like many other generals, saw some harshness and categorical assessments of the order, but they were justified by a very severe and anxious time. In the order, we were primarily attracted by its social and moral content. He drew attention to himself by the severity of the rule, not by the personalities of the conversation between the people's commissar and the Supreme Commander-in-Chief I.V. Stalin with Soviet soldiers, starting from an ordinary soldier and ending with a commander. Reading it, each of us thought about whether we give all our strength to the struggle. We realized that the cruelty and categorical demands of the order came on behalf of the Motherland, the people, and it was important not what penalties would be introduced, although this mattered, but that it raised the consciousness of responsibility among the soldiers for the fate of their socialist Fatherland. And the disciplinary measures that were introduced

by order, have already ceased to be an indispensable, urgent necessity even before the Soviet troops went over to the counteroffensive near Stalingrad and encircled the Nazi group on the banks of the Volga!

How right was A.M. Vasilevsky regarding the fact that those disciplinary measures that were introduced by order, "has already ceased to be an indispensable, urgent necessity", we will see in the course of further narration. And now we will give an assessment given to Order No. 227 by Marshal of the Soviet Union G.K. Zhukov in his "Memoirs and Reflections". He wrote: "In some places panic moods and violations of military discipline reappeared in the troops. In an effort to stop the fall in the morale of the troops, I.V. Stalin issued Order No. 227 on July 28, 1942. This order introduced harsh measures to combat alarmists and violators of discipline, and strongly condemned "retreat" moods. It said that an iron law for active troops should be the requirement "Not a step back!" The order was backed up by intensified party-political work among the troops"?

We have given estimates of Order No. 227, which were given by two prominent military figures who played key roles in the leadership of the Armed Forces during the Great Patriotic War. It is clear that at the time when G.K. Zhukov and A.M. Vasilevsky were preparing their memoirs for publication, under harsh conditions.

1 Cited. by: Vasilevsky A.M. The work of a lifetime. - M.: OLMA-PRESS, 2002. S. 209, 211. 2 Zhukov G.K. Memories and reflections. In Zt. T. 2. - 10th

ed., supplemented by the author's manuscript. - M.: Publishing house of the Novosti Press Agency, 1990. P. 286.

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It was not customary for the uttermost censorship to negatively evaluate the actions of the top military leadership. Later, in the draft of his speech at the Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU, which did not take place, G.K. Zhukov noted in 1956: "A number of orders were issued in which the personnel of our troops, especially commanders and political workers, were indiscriminately accused of cowardice and cowardice. Already after our troops had shown themselves capable of not only defending themselves, but also inflicting serious blows on the enemy, Stalin found it necessary to write in one of his orders: "The population of our country, with love and respect for the Red Army, is beginning to be disappointed in her, is losing faith in the Red Army, and many of them are cursing the Red Army because it is giving our people under the yoke of German oppressors, while it is flowing away to the east." With this order, Stalin undeservedly discredited the fighting and moral qualities of our soldiers, officers and generals." According to Zhukov, "this was done in order to ward off the guilt and anger of the people for the unpreparedness and mistakes made in the leadership of the troops from the Headquarters to the division inclusive"!

On the basis of order No. 227 of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR, a number of documents of other departments and institutions were issued. So, People's Commissar of Justice N.M. Rychkov and USSR Prosecutor K.P. Gorshenin signed on July 31 directive No. 1096, which qualified the actions of commanders, commissars and political workers brought to trial for "unauthorized retreat from a combat position without an order from higher commanders and for propaganda of a further retreat of Krasnoyarsk

1 Cited. Quoted from: Krasnov V.G. Unknown Zhukov. Laurels and thorns of the commander. Documentation. Opinions. Reflections. — M.: OLMA-PRESS, 2000. S. 568, 569.

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army", and also determined the timing of the investigation of this category of cases. Actions consisting in unauthorized retreat without an order were qualified under Art. 58-1 "b" of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR (treason committed by military personnel was punishable by the highest

a measure of criminal punishment - execution with confiscation of all property). The investigation in such cases should not exceed 48 hours. Propaganda for a further retreat was qualified under Art. 58-10, part 2 of the Criminal Code (counter-revolutionary propaganda and agitation in the presence of an aggravating circumstance - military situation or martial law - was punishable by execution). The directive ordered the military prosecutors and chairmen of the tribunals to take "decisive measures to tell the command and political agencies of real assistance in carrying out the tasks set in the order of the people's commissar of defense".

August 26 People's Commissar of Justice N.M. Rychkov issued an order "On the tasks of the military tribunals for the implementation of the order of the NPO of the USSR No. 227 of July 28, 1942"<sup>2</sup>. and institution. With regard to malicious criminals, it was ordered to apply tough measures, to warn unstable people from committing a crime, to prevent indiscriminate conviction of persons, in relation to

<sup>1</sup> See: Collection of Legislative and Normative Acts on Repressions and Rehabilitation of Victims of Political Repressions. - M., 1993. S. 41.

<sup>2</sup> See: Military tribunals - bodies of justice in the Armed Forces of the USSR. 70 years of military tribunals. - M.: Military Publishing House, 1988. S. 135.

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upon which disciplinary measures and other measures provided for by Order No. 227 may be taken, including sending them to penal units.

The procedure for accounting for servicemen sent to penal battalions and companies was determined in the directive of the General Staff of the Red Army No. 989242 dated August 28, sent to the chiefs of staff of the fronts and the 7th separate army. It was signed by the Deputy Chief of the General Staff, Major General F.E. Bokov and the head of the Organizational Directorate of the General Staff, Major General A.G. Karponosov. This document stated: "In order to account for the servicemen sent to penal battalions and companies in accordance with the order of the NPO No. On the 15th, reports on the number of variable composition in penal battalions and companies, showing the following data in this information:

1. The number of penal battalions and companies in the front.
2. How many people (punishers) are in the variable composition of penal battalions and companies.
3. Including how many and for how long they were assigned to penal battalions and companies.
4. Of those appointed, how many and at what time actually departed (show the number of people by periods, up to a month, from a month to two months, etc.).
5. The number of variable composition of penal battalions and companies according to the positions they previously held: privates, junior commanders, command platoons, commanders, etc.
8. The number of variable composition of penal battalions and companies according to military ranks assigned

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to their demolition, in total for each rank (lieutenants, senior lieutenants, captains, junior political instructors, etc.).

Submit the first report by September 5 of this year as of September 1.

By the end of September 1942, regulations on penal formations and their staffs were developed. The Regulations "On penal battalions of the active army" and "On penal companies of the active army" were approved on September 26 by the Deputy People's Commissar of Defense, General of the Army G.K. Zhukov (see appendices No. 2 and No. 3) and put into effect by order No. 298 of the Deputy People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR, Army Commissar of the 1st rank E.A. Shchadenko dated 28 September.

In accordance with the Regulations, penal battalions were created with "the purpose of enabling persons of the middle and senior command, political and commanding staff of all branches of the armed forces who were guilty of violating discipline due to cowardice or instability, to atone for their crimes against the Motherland with blood courageous struggle with the enemy in a more difficult sector of hostilities. The regulation stipulated that the penal battalions were under the jurisdiction of the Military Councils of the Fronts. Within each front, in accordance with the prevailing situation, it was necessary to create from one to three penal battalions, which could be attached to a rifle division or a separate rifle brigade.

The permanent composition of the penal battalion included the commander, military commissars of the battalion and companies, commanders and political leaders of platoons, as well as

1 Cited. Quoted from: Russian archive: Great Patriotic War: General Staff during the Great Patriotic War: Documents and materials. 1942 T. 23(12-2). — M.: TERRA, 1999. S. 316.

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the rest of the commanding staff. The commander and military commissar of a penal battalion used the disciplinary power of the commander and military commissar of the division in relation to the penalized, the deputy commander and military commissar of the battalion - the power of the commander and military commissar of the regiment, the commanders and military commissars of companies - the power of the commander and the military commissar of the battalion, and the commanders and political leaders of the platoons - by the authority of the commanders and political leaders of the companies. For the entire permanent composition of the penal battalions, the length of service in ranks, in comparison with the command, political and commanding staff of the combat units of the army, was halved, and each month of service in the permanent composition of the penal battalion was counted at assigning a pension for six months.

Persons of the middle and senior command, political and commanding staff were sent to penal battalions as a variable composition for a period of one to three months by order for a division or brigade (for a corps - in relation to the personnel of corps units, or for the army and the front - in relation to - research institutes of units of army and front subordination, respectively). For the same terms could be sent by the verdict of military tribunals (active army and rear) persons of middle and senior command, political and commanding staff, convicted with the application of a deferred execution of the sentence (note 2 to article 28 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR). Moreover, the commanders and military commissars of battalions and regiments were sent to a penal battalion only by the verdict of the military tribunal of the front. Everyone who was sent to the penal battalion was subject to demotion to the rank and file. However, it was allowed to appoint

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penalized officers to the positions of junior command staff with the assignment of the ranks of corporal, junior sergeant and sergeant.

The Regulations established that for military distinction, penalized soldiers could be released ahead of schedule on the proposal of the command of the penal battalion, approved by the Military Council of the front, and for especially outstanding military distinction, they could be presented with a government award. All those released from the penal battalion were restored in rank and in all rights. Penitentiaries who were wounded in battle were considered to have served their sentence. They were subject to restoration in military rank and in all rights, and after recovery they were sent for further service, and the disabled were assigned a pension from the salary of maintenance in the last position before being transferred to the penal battalion.

Penal companies were created with the aim of enabling ordinary soldiers and junior commanders of all branches of the armed forces, who were guilty of violating discipline due to cowardice or instability, to redeem their guilt before the Motherland with blood by a brave struggle against enemy on a difficult site of hostilities. They were under the jurisdiction of the Military Councils of the armies. Within each army, it was planned to create from five to ten penal companies, which were attached to a rifle regiment, division and brigade.

The regulation determined that the permanent composition of the penal companies included: the commander and military commissar of the company, commanders and political leaders of platoons and the rest of the permanent commanding staff. The commander and military commissar of a penal company used the disciplinary power of the commander and military commissar of the regiment in relation to the penalized, the deputy commander and military commissar

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companies - by the authority of the commander and military commissar of the battalion, and commanders and political leaders of platoons - by the authority of commanders and political leaders of companies. They were given the same benefits as the permanent staff of penal battalions.

The variable composition of penal companies was recruited from among ordinary soldiers and junior commanders, who were sent to these units for a period of one to three months. At the same time, junior commanders were subject to demotion to the rank and file. In all other respects (the order of release, reinstatement in military ranks, awards, etc.), the Regulations on penal companies were identical to the Regulations on penal battalions.

Subsequently, a number of orders and directives were issued, which significantly expanded the circle of persons who had the right to send military personnel to penal formations, and also increased the number of misdemeanors, for which, as a punishment, they were sent to penal units and subunits.

First of all, measures were taken against those convicted by military tribunals for military and other crimes with the use of a suspension of the execution of the sentence until the end of the war. Thus, the Deputy People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR Army Commissar of the 1st rank E.A. On October 16, 1942, Shchadenko signed Order No. 323 with the following content: "People's Commissar of Defense Comrade. Stalin, in Order No. 227, pointed out that the main reason for our temporary failures at the front was weak discipline in the troops:

"There is a lack of order and discipline in companies, battalions, regiments, divisions, in tank units, in air squadrons. This is now our main shortcoming." What was said by the People's Commissar of Defense Comrade. Stalin about the troops of the active army as a whole and half

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also applies to the troops of the internal organs. In spare parts, in training centers, training brigades and regiments, in local rifle units, new formations and military schools, education and discipline are still at a low level. This is largely due to the fact that in a number of cases the command and command personnel do not serve as an example of discipline and exactingness, they themselves do not use the full power granted to them and do not demand this from their subordinates. As a result, disorganization, laxity are brought to the front and, as a result, cowardice and cowardice in the face of the enemy, desertion and other crimes.

Many deserters, as well as embezzlers of military property, drunkards, malicious violators of military discipline and other unstable elements convicted by military tribunals with the use of a stay of execution of the sentence until the end of the war, actually avoid

punishment.

The convicts end up in spare parts and are sent to the army along with all the honest fighters as part of marching replacements. Not infrequently, these persons, being in spare parts, as well as on their way to the front, carry out corrupting work, and when they arrive at the place, they dissolve in the general mass, and many of them hide their criminal record.

Thus, the court verdict does not reach the goal, the authority of the court is undermined and, in fact, harm is done to the military units where these people arrive.

In accordance with the order of the People's Commissar of Defense Comrade. Stalin dated July 28 of this year. No. 227 and the regulations on penal battalions and companies of the army in the field (NGO order No. 298 of 1942) I order:

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1. All military personnel convicted by military tribunals for military and other crimes with the application of a suspension of execution of the sentence until the end of the war (note 2 to article 28 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR) should be sent to penal units of the active army for a period of one to three months : Red Army soldiers and junior commanders - in penal companies, persons of command and command staff - in penal battalions.

If the period of stay in the penal unit is not specified in the court verdict, then it is established by order of the commander of the military unit in which the convicted person is located (or the head of the garrison), in accordance with the measure of punishment imposed by the military tribunal...

4. In cases where the military tribunal, by its verdict, did not demote the convict to the rank and file and did not file a petition to deprive him of orders and medals, the demotion and removal of orders and medals should be carried out in the manner prescribed by the regulations on penal units.

5. Marching companies (teams) of penalized officers from the internal districts should be sent: from the ArkhVO to the Karelian Front, from the Far Eastern Fleet and Zabfront to the Leningrad Front, from the Siberian Military District to the North-Western Front, from the Ural Military District to the Kalinin Front, from the MVO to the Western and Bryansk fronts, from the PriVO to the Voronezh front, from the YuzhurVO to the Don front, from the SAVO to the Stalingrad front...

7. After serving in the penal parts of the appointed term, convicts who have not been deprived of ranks and orders by the verdict of a military tribunal are restored in rank and in the right to wear orders and medals and are sent for further service.

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8. The removal of a criminal record from persons sent to penal units is carried out in accordance with the general procedure at the request of the command of the penal unit or the military unit where the convict arrived after being released from the penal unit.

Later, on January 26, 1944, in order to streamline the practice of transferring convicts to the active army, order No. 004/0073/006/23 was issued, signed by Deputy Commissar of Defense Marshal of the Soviet Union A.M. Vasilevsky, People's Commissar of Internal Affairs L.P. Beria, People's Commissar of Justice N.M. Rychkov and USSR Prosecutor K.P. Gorshenin. It required:

"1. Prohibit courts and military tribunals from applying Note 2 to Article 28 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR (and the corresponding articles of the Criminal Code of other Union Republics) to those convicted of counter-revolutionary crimes, banditry, robbery, robbery, recidivist thieves, persons who already had in the past a conviction for the crimes listed above, as well as those who repeatedly deserted from the Red Army.

For other categories of cases, when deciding on the suspension of the execution of a sentence with the direction of the convict to the active army, courts and military tribunals take into account the personality of the convict, the nature of the crime committed and other circumstances of the case.

2. To the investigating authorities, but For cases in which . preliminary investigation is not carried out, the courts should accurately determine the attitude of the accused towards

1 Citation, according to: Russian archive: Great Patriotic War: Orders of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR June 22, 1941 - 1942, vol. 13(2-2). - S. 332-333.

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Indian duty, past convictions and other data characterizing the accused.

3. Suspension of the execution of sentences by courts and military tribunals shall be applied only to those persons whose peers are drafted (mobilized) into the Red Army.

4. The suspension of the execution of the sentence with the direction of the convict to the active army to the courts and military tribunals shall be provided for in the sentence itself.

5. When passing a sentence using note 2 to article 28 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR (and the corresponding articles of the Criminal Code of other Union republics), courts and military tribunals, as a measure of restraint, leave the convicts in custody and send them under convoy back to the places of detention...

7. Persons recognized as fit to serve in the active army should be accepted by military registration and enlistment offices in places of detention on receipt and sent to the penal battalions of military districts for their subsequent sending to penal units of the active army along with copies of sentences.

The procedure for sending to the active fleet and flotilla officers convicted by military tribunals with the application of a suspension of the execution of the sentence until the end of the war was established by order No. 0935 of the People's Commissar of the Navy, Admiral of the Fleet N.G. Kuznetsov dated December 28, 1944. It said:

"When sending to active fleets, flotillas of officers convicted by military tribunals with the application of a suspension of the execution of the sentence until the end of hostilities (note 2 to article 28 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR), I order to be guided by the following:

1. Send to the penalty areas:

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a) officers convicted by military tribunals with deprivation of military rank;

6) officers convicted by military tribunals, although without deprivation of military ranks, but for serious crimes (murder, squandering of military property, malicious hooliganism, etc.).

The period of stay in the penal unit shall be established by order of the commander of the fleet (flotilla) where the convict serves, in accordance with the punishment imposed by the military tribunal.

2. Not to send officers convicted by military tribunals without deprivation of military ranks to the penal units of the operating fleets, flotillas, if the crimes committed by them are not serious. These officers should be used in officer positions in the combat units of the operating fleets with a demotion.

3. The officers to be sent to penal units in accordance with section 1-mu of paragraphs "a" and "b" of this order, send:

a) convicted on the Red Banner Baltic, Northern and Pacific Fleets and on the Red Banner Amur Flotilla - to the penal units of the Red Banner Dnieper Flotilla, mountains. Pinsk;

6) those convicted in the Black Sea Fleet and the Caspian Flotilla - to the penal units of the Danube Flotilla, mountains. Ishmael.

4. Officers convicted by military tribunals with a suspended sentence until the end of hostilities shall be sent to active fleets, flotillas in the following order:

a) officers convicted with deprivation of their officer ranks shall be sent on the same grounds as convicted enlisted and senior officers;

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6) officers convicted without deprivation of rank, but for serious crimes, should be concentrated in the naval crew and sent in teams with the senior officer at least twice per month.

Upon arrival at the operating fleet, the flotilla, the team is placed at the disposal of the personnel department of the officers of the fleet, the flotilla and [the convicts] are sent to penal units, where they are used on the general basis established by the "Regulations on Penal Units";

c) officers convicted on inactive fleets, flotillas without deprivation of military rank, who are not subject to being sent to penal units (section 2 of this order), are sent to active fleets in a single order.

Those convicted in the Pacific Fleet and the Red Banner Amur Flotilla should be sent to the Northern Fleet; convicts on the Caspian flotilla to be sent to the Danube flotilla.

Copies of the verdicts shall be handed over to these officers, and the second copies of the verdicts shall be sent by post to the head of the personnel department of the officers of the corresponding fleet, flotilla.

5. The military councils of the operating fleets and flotillas should apply the demotion of the officers to the rank and file and the sending to the penal unit without sentences of military tribunals only for cowardice and instability (order of the NKVMF No. 270 - 1942) "".

The Regulations on penal battalions and companies determined the rights of officials who could send military personnel to penal formations.

1 Quoted from: Russian archive. The Great Patriotic War. Orders and Directives of the People's Commissar of the Navy during the Great Patriotic War. T. 21(10). - M.: TERRA, 1996. S. 353-354.

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those of the army in the field. Less than a year later, this right was granted to the command staff of military districts and inactive fronts. At the same time, the types of misdemeanors were also determined, for which, in the form of punishment, one could be sent without trial to penal units and subunits. Here is what was said about this in the order of the People's Commissar of Defense I.V. Stalin No. 413 of August 21, 1943:

"1. Grant the right to the commanders of regiments (individual units) of the active army and commanders of divisions (individual brigades) and their equals in military districts and inactive fronts with their power, without trial, to send to the penal units of the active army their subordinate sergeants and privates for unauthorized absenteeism, desertion, failure to comply with an order, squandering and theft of military property, violation of the statutory rules of guard duty and other military crimes in cases where the usual disciplinary measures for these offenses are insufficient.

2. Grant the right to the heads of garrisons, who enjoy the rights not lower than the regiment commander, by their authority, without trial, to send to the penal units of the active army all the detained deserters of sergeants and privates who fled from parts of the active army and from other garrisons.

If the head of the garrison does not exercise the rights of a regiment commander and above, then the direction of the detained deserters to the penal units is to be carried out by order of the commanders of formations (regional military commissars), to whom the heads of the garrisons are subordinate, on the proposal of the latter.

3. To establish the fact of a crime, carry out an inquiry in accordance with the order of the NCO of 1942.

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No. 357. The direction to the penal unit should be issued by order for the unit (garrison) in the prescribed manner (NGO orders of 1942 Nos. 296 and 323).

4. In cases where a more severe measure of punishment should be applied to the guilty person, the inquiry should be sent to the military prosecutor's office to bring the guilty person to trial by a military tribunal!

Special documents also determined the procedure for sending to penal units military personnel who deserted from the Red Army or voluntarily went over to the side of the enemy, as well as those who were in captivity or in the occupied territory. So, on March 10, 1943, Deputy People's Commissar of Defense Army Commissar of the 1st rank E.A. Shchadenko signed directive No. 97, which noted: "When conscripted into the Red Army in areas liberated from German invaders, former servicemen are identified who at one time surrendered to the enemy without resistance or deserted from the Red Army and remained to live in the territory temporarily occupied by the Germans or, finding themselves surrounded in their place of residence, remained at home, not trying to go out with units of the Red Army.

After a quick check, such persons are immediately sent to penal units.

The order and places of verification in relation to ordinary and junior command personnel shall be established by order of the military council of the army, and in relation to middle and higher command personnel -

by order of the military council of the front.

To send to special camps only persons on whom

1 Quoted from: Russian archive: Great Patriotic War: Orders of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR (1943-1945). - T. 13 (2-3) - M.: TERRA, 1997, S. 198.

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there are serious data for suspicion of anti-Soviet activity.

Soviet citizens who collaborated with the occupiers were also sent to penal units. For example, the report of Strekovsky, head of the department for special affairs of the Main Military Prosecutor's Office, noted that those policemen who held senior positions or who had stained themselves with serious crimes fled with the Germans. There are those who, in principle, can be drafted into the army. "All these persons," the document says, "can be quickly checked by interviewing the local population and then, in the absence of data on their recruitment, betrayal or other moments, transferred to the Red Army, sent to serve in penal companies." The proposal was accepted and formalized in the form of a joint directive of the NKVD / NKGB of the USSR No. 494/94 dated November 11, 1943.

Servicemen who committed other offenses were also sent to penal battalions and companies. As an illustration, we will use Order No. 0682 of the Deputy People's Commissar of Defense, Major General of Artillery V.V. Aborenkov dated September 10, 1942: "On September 9, 1942, the command of the 58th Guards Mortar Regiment presented an act of technical inspection of military and transport vehicles. According to the act, up to 80% of all vehicles were rendered unusable, and the nature of the damage and the massive decommissioning of military equipment directly indicate the criminal attitude of the driver, command and political staff of the regiment to valuable and severely scarce military equipment.

1 Cited. Quoted from: Russian archive: Great Patriotic War. Prelude of the Battle of Kursk. T. 15 (4-3). — M.: TERRA, 1997. S. 49.

2 Quot. By; Kuznetsov A. Penalty // Duel. 2005. No. 3. 29

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Decommissioning of imported vehicles, in the absence of spare parts for them, permanently disables valuable and much-needed military vehicles.

I order:

1. To a member of the military council of the guards mortar units of the Stalingrad Front, brigade commissar comrade. Zhukov, together with representatives of the special department and the armored department of the Stalingrad Front, to immediately investigate and identify the perpetrators of the mass and criminal damage to military and transport vehicles.
2. Those guilty of intentional damage to cars are to be shot before formation. Those guilty of careless attitude to the military equipment entrusted to them should be immediately sent to penal rifle battalions.
3. Submit the act of investigation with the names of the perpetrators to me by September 14, 1942 for approval.
4. I warn all commanders and commissars of regiments, divisions, batteries and the entire technical command staff of the units and the entire driver's staff that for damage and incapacitation of combat or

transport vehicles, the perpetrators will either be shot, as if for damage to weapons, or immediately sent to penal rifle battalions.

I order the military councils of the operational groups of the guards mortar units of the fronts to stop their liberal attitude towards those guilty of damaging valuable and extremely scarce combat and transport vehicles, immediately bringing those responsible to the strictest responsibility. .

Those guilty of intentional damage should be immediately shot before formation, and those guilty of negligent attitude should immediately be sent to penal rifle battalions.

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Bring this order to the entire command, political and commanding staff, as well as to the entire driver's staff of the Guards mortar units of the Red Army.

September 9, 1942 I.V. Stalin, as People's Commissar of Defense, signed Order No. 0685, which established for what violations pilots should be sent to penal units. In particular, it said: "Facts on the Kalinin, Western, Stalingrad, South-Eastern and other fronts established that our fighter aviation, as a rule, works poorly and very often does not fulfill its combat missions. Our fighters not only do not engage in combat with enemy fighters, but avoid attacking bombers (so in the text. - Comp.).

When carrying out the task of covering attack aircraft and bombers, our fighters, even with a quantitative superiority over enemy fighters, evade combat, move to the side and allow our attack aircraft and bombers to be shot down with impunity.

NPO Order No. 0299 provided for flight personnel as incentives cash rewards and government awards for combat sorties with the performance of a combat mission. This order in the air units is perverted at the fronts.

A sortie is incorrectly considered to be any flight on the battlefield, regardless of whether or not the fighters have completed the combat mission assigned to them ...

In order to eliminate such injustice and in order to encourage only honest  
pilots, and fishing

1 Cited. By; Russian archive: Great Patriotic War: Orders of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR June 22, 1941 - 1942. Vol. 13 (2-2). - S. 300.

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Kacha and cowards to identify, expel from the ranks of our fighters and punish them, I order:

1. To consider as a sortie for fighters only such a sortie, in which attack aircraft and bombers, when performing a combat mission, had no losses from attacks by enemy fighters...

4. Fighter pilots who evade combat with an air enemy should be brought to justice and transferred to penal units in the infantry!

During the Great Patriotic War, those who allowed serious shortcomings in the organization of food, logistics and consumer services for Red Army soldiers and commanders were also severely punished. In connection with these cases, a number of orders were issued, some of which we will quote.

December 4, 1942 Deputy People's Commissar of Defense A.S. Shcherbakov signed order No. 0931, which noted "flagrant facts of a soulless-bureaucratic attitude towards the material and domestic needs of political workers who are in the reserve of the Heads of the PURKKA at the Military-Political School named after M.V. Frunze. These facts included: poor catering for personnel; low quality of cooked food; ugly living conditions; keeping the premises in an unsanitary condition; lack of uniforms, shoes, bedding, etc. On this occasion, the order of the document, in particular, stated: assistant head of the school for logistics

| Collection of military documents of the Great Patriotic War. No. 5. -M., 1947. S. 37.

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According to Major Kopotienko and the head of the baggage and clothing supply school, senior lieutenant of the quartermaster service, Govtvyanits, be removed from their posts and sent to the active army in a penal battalion ... "!

Significant shortcomings in the organization of food for the Red Army were revealed in March - May 1943 and on the Kalinin Front. In the resolution of the State Defense Committee No. 3425 dated May 24, 1943, in this regard, attention was drawn to the lack of control by the Military Council of the front over the organization of food supply and nutrition for the troops. On the basis of this decision, on May 31, Stalin signed order No. 0374 for the People's Commissariat of Defense, in which he demanded, along with bringing to justice a number of officials of the front, "persons in command who are guilty of interruptions in the food of the fighters or the lack of food for the fighters, decide - with the help of the military council of the front, send them to penal battalions and companies ... "2

Persons of the commanding and commanding staff were also sent to penal units, allowing carelessness and lack of control, as a result of which military personnel died in the rear. For example, in May 1944, People's Commissar of Defense I.V. Stalin signed the following order: "May 18 of this year. at the Krasnoarmeyskaya station, in the echelon with marching reinforcements coming from the 6th reserve rifle division, as a result

1 Cited. Quoted from: Russian archive: Great Patriotic War: Orders of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR June 22, 1941 - 1942, vol. 13 (2-2). - S. 372-374.

2 Russian archive: Great Patriotic War: Orders of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR (1943-1945). - T. 13 (2-3). - M.: TERRA, 1997. S. 165-169.

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those indiscretions of the officers, the Red Army soldiers, picking up an unexploded mine, began to break boards for making a fire with it, and from the explosion of this mine 4 people were killed and 9 people were injured. The criminal elements that were part of the echelon, taking advantage of this incident, involved the unstable Red Army soldiers in violating military discipline, disarming and beating the officers ...

I order:

... To the Military Council of the Kharkov Military District, the officers of the echelon, who showed inaction during the incident, to deprive them of their military ranks and send them to the penal unit.



Check the sergeants and rank and file of the echelon and those directly guilty of violating discipline - bring them to trial by a military tribunal, and send the rest to the penal unit, except for the sergeant and rank and file of the company of submachine gunners and the marching battery, who did not take part in the riots ... "!

As is known, Order No. 227 noted that regimental commanders "may be sent to a penal battalion only by the verdict of a front military tribunal." But there were also exceptions to this rule, when officials directly violated the order of the people's commissar of defense. This, in particular, applies to the Deputy People's Commissar of Defense, Marshal G.K. Zhukov, who, in his order of April 29, 1944, demanded: "... For failure to comply with the order of the military council of the army, for leaving the enemy advantageous positions and not taking measures to

recovery by

1 Cited. Quoted from: Russian archive: Great Patriotic War: Orders of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR (1943-1945). T. 13 (2-3). — M.: TERRA, 1997. S. 294.

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for cowardice, false reports and refusal to fulfill the assigned combat mission, the commander of the 342nd Guards Rifle Regiment of the Guard, Lieutenant Colonel Yachmenev Fyodor Abramovich, was sent to a penal battalion for a period of two months to atone for his guilt before the Motherland.

2. An order to announce to all officers up to and including the battalion commander "!

Those liable for military service and servicemen feigning illness, and the so-called "mutilators" were also subject to being sent to penal units. On this occasion, order No. 0882 of November 12, 1942 was issued, which was signed by the Deputy People's Commissar of Defense, army commissar of the 1st rank E.A. Shchadenko. The order noted that many commanders of units, formations, doctors, district, city and regional military commissars show unacceptable liberalism in relation to persons claiming minor and even imaginary illnesses and physical disabilities. As a result, persons with minor, easily treatable diseases or deficiencies (trachoma in the initial stage, scabies, bruises, cuts, hernia, etc.), low vision, hearing, etc. are exempted from service. The order required: "...Send for re-examination of military personnel recognized by medical commissions as fit for service, but continuing to declare themselves sick, without a preliminary thorough examination by doctors of the units and their written conclusions. If it is established that a serviceman is feigning illness and self-mutilation, bring to trial, and convicts immediately

1 Cited. Quoted from: Russian archive: Great Patriotic War: Orders of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR (1943-1945). T. 13 (2-3). — M.: TERRA, 1997. S. 277.

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sent to the penal units of the active army ...,"<sup>1</sup>

Sometimes whole parts were transferred to the penalty area. For example, on November 23, 1944, People's Commissar of Defense I.V. Stalin signed Order No. 0380 as follows: "The 214th Cavalry Regiment of the 63rd Cavalry Korsun Red Banner Division (Commander of the Guards Regiment Lieutenant Colonel Danilevich) lost the Combat Red Banner of the regiment in the battle on October 26, 1944...

In accordance with the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR of December 21, 1942, the regiment commander and officers guilty of such disgrace are subject to court-martial, and

the military unit of the dis- formation.

Taking into account that the loss of the Red Banner occurred not due to the cowardice of the personnel of the 214th cavalry regiment, but due to the lack of control of the regiment commander, Guard Lieutenant Colonel Danilevich, and that the 214th cavalry regiment in previous battles with the Nazi invaders successfully completed the combat missions of the command, - I order:

1. Transfer the 214th cavalry regiment to the category of penal ones and warn the entire personnel of the regiment that by their actions in battles they must atone for their guilt before the Motherland ...

5. This order is to be announced to all personnel of the Red Army.

1 Cited. Quoted from: Russian archive: Great Patriotic War: Orders of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR June 22, 1941 - 1942, vol. 13 (2-2). - S. 361-364.

2 Quot. Quoted from: Russian archive: Great Patriotic War: Orders of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR (1943-1945). T. 13 (2-3). - S. 332-333.

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Subsequently, the personnel of the regiment showed courage and dedication in battles. At the request of the military council of the 3rd Ukrainian Front, the 214th cavalry regiment was returned to its former status and presented with a new Banner.

Not only male servicemen, but also women were sent to penal formations. Later we will see that some participants in the war categorically denied the possibility of this. However, experience has shown that it is inexpedient to send female servicemen who have committed minor crimes to penal institutions. Therefore, on September 19, 1943, the directive of the General Staff No. 1484/2 was sent to the chiefs of staff of the fronts, military districts and individual armies, which ordered: "Female servicemen convicted of crimes committed should not be sent to penal units. Those of them who, for their crimes, were convicted by military tribunals using the second note to Art. 28 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR, to send to the units of the army.

Female servicemen for crimes in the order specified in the NPO order No. 0413 should not be sent to penal units either, limited to strict disciplinary sanctions, and if it is impossible to resolve the case in a disciplinary procedure, they should be tried by a military tribunal!

The formation of penal battalions and companies was sometimes not as successful as required by the leadership of the People's Commissariat of Defense and the General

1 Cited. Quoted from: Russian archive: Great Patriotic War: General Staff during the Great Patriotic War: Documents and materials. 1943 T. 23 (12-3). — M.: TERRA, 1999. S. 331.

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headquarters. In this regard, Deputy Commissar of Defense Marshal of the Soviet Union G.K. Zhukov in March 1943 sent directive No. GUF/1902 to the commanders of the fronts, which noted: "Checks of penal units carried out by the military prosecutor's office established that it took several months to form and staff penal battalions and companies, during which the penalty boxers sat in the rear, did not participate in the battles. So, the penal battalion of the Volkhov Front was in the rear for more than three months,

having in its composition only 64 penalty box with 100 permanent members. A significant part of the penalty box of the 63rd and 65th companies of the Stalingrad Front was also in the rear for about three months. Penal companies of the 10th Army, numbering only 30-40 people per company, carried out housekeeping work at the second echelons.

In order to use penal units in strict accordance with the order of the People's Commissar of Defense No. 227 and the regulations on penal units, I order:

1. Reduce the number of penal companies in the armies. Assemble the penalized into consolidated companies and, thus, keep them in a set, preventing them from being aimless in the rear and using them in the most difficult areas of hostilities.
2. In the event of a significant shortage in the penal battalions, introduce them into battle in squadrons, without waiting for the arrival of new penalized officers from the officers in order to cover the shortage of the entire battalion ... "!

1 Cited. By: The Great Patriotic War. 1941-1945. Military-historical essays. Book two. Fracture. — M.: Nauka, 1998. S. 437.

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How Order No. 227 was carried out directly in the active army can be judged from the documents of the warring fronts. So, in the summer and autumn of 1942, the troops of the Leningrad and Volkhov fronts carried out private offensive operations, frustrating the plans of the command of the Army Group "North" to capture Leningrad. Despite the fact that the Soviet troops as a whole fought successfully against the enemy, serious shortcomings were observed in the actions of some units and formations. As noted in his order No. 00182 dated July 31, 1942, the commander of the troops of the Leningrad Front, Lieutenant General of Artillery L.A. Govorov: "... The command of the 85th Rifle Division, 39th and 103rd Rifle Regiments showed cowardice, controlling the battle from dugouts and not having observation posts in which the field of activity of their troops could be seen. There were no commanders and political workers in the division who would be able to reveal in time the non-compliance with the combat order and, by personal example on the battlefield, enlist units and subunits to complete the task.

Based on this fact, Govorov ordered: "... Persons of the command and political staff of the 85th Rifle Division, who were the main culprits for the failure to fulfill a combat mission, should be removed from their posts, deprived or demoted in military ranks, deprived of orders and medals and sent to the front penal battalion. On August 2, the Chief of Staff should submit the relevant proposals to me for approval.

Junior officers and rank and file, who showed cowardice on the battlefield, be removed from the units and

sent to the army penal company ... "!

1 Cited. by: Leningrad survived and won. - M., 2004. S. 204-205. 39

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The formation of penal units on the Volkhov Front can be judged from the report of the head of the political department of the Volkhov Front, Brigadier Commissar K. Kalashnikov, which was sent on August 6, 1942 to the head of the Main Political Directorate of the Red Army. It says: "... In accordance with the staffing adopted by the Military Council of the Front and the plans for staffing detachments, penal companies and battalions, the political administration selected ... for two penal battalions - two military commissars, two secretaries of the party bureau, two secretaries of the Somol bureaus and eight political officers of the company ...

On July 31, the Military Council of the Front adopted a special resolution on cases of treason against the Motherland by individual servicemen in the 54th Army and the facts of the criminally careless organization of the military security and intelligence service. The Military Council of the 54th Army was ordered to remove from his posts and put on trial with the direction to the penal battalion the commander of the 3rd platoon of the 3rd company of the 6th separate brigade of the Marine Corps Sergeant P.P. Voikov, the commander of the 3rd company - tenant Sobolev I.M., political instructor of the 3rd company Sergeant G.I. Smerdov, commander of the 1st battalion, Art. lieutenant Odintsov G.V. and commissar of the 1st battalion commissar Ulyanin A.F. as those who did not take sufficient measures and did not prevent the traitors to the Motherland, former soldiers of the 3rd company from going over to the enemy ... "!

In the memoirs of war veterans and studies by a number of authors, it is often emphasized that penal battalions were often referred to as "officer" penal battalions. In principle, this is true

1 Cited. by: Leningrad survived and won. S. 294. 40

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how they were staffed by persons of middle and senior command, political and commanding staff, that is, officers. But, as we can see, there were also violations of the Regulations on penal battalions. The commander of the 3rd platoon of the 3rd company of the 6th separate marine brigade, Sergeant P.P. Voikov and political instructor of the 3rd company, sergeant G.I. Smerdov, according to their position, belonged to the average composition, but according to their military rank they did not fit the concept of "officer penal battalion". Therefore, sometimes the attacks of some researchers on others that they distort the truth are not entirely correct. It is necessary to be guided by documentary sources and then already draw the appropriate conclusions.

In the Regulations approved by G.K. Zhukov, it was noted that the permanent composition of the penal battalion and the penal company included the commander and military commissar of the battalion (company), commanders and military commissars of companies, commanders and political leaders of platoons, as well as the rest of the permanent commander compound. Not having the staff of penal battalions and companies, we will use publications that contain various data on the organizational structure of these units and units, as well as their technical equipment. For example, I.V. Kuzmichev in the article "Penalty Boxes" writes that the regular structure of a separate penal battalion included: commander; management (deputy commander, deputy commander for political affairs, quartermaster, clerk); headquarters (chief of staff, deputy chief of staff, assistant chief of staff, head of the medical unit, head of communications, 2 clerks); three companies, each with three platoons. The penal company consisted of a commander, management

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(deputy commander, deputy commander for political affairs, clerk, medical instructor, foreman), three platoons.

According to the memoirs of war participants who fought as part of penal formations, their structure differed from that which was approved by orders of the People's Commissariat of Defense. So, A.V. Poltsyn in the book "Penalty Shot, or How an Officer Penal Battalion Reached Berlin" tells that at the end of April 1943 in the village of Zmievka near Orel, the formation of the 8th separate penal (officer) battalion of the Central front. Probably, the author was mistaken, since this battalion was listed in the combat schedule of the penal units since 1942, first on the Don and then on the Central Front. The staff of the battalion administration and its subdivisions, notes A.V. Poltsyn was recruited mainly from officers who had gained combat experience in the Battle of Stalingrad. The battalion commander (staff colonel) had two general deputies, the chief of staff and political officer (lieutenant colonels), as well as a supply assistant; the chief of staff has four assistants ((PNSH-1, 2, 3, 4) - majors. Each company had 200 or more fighters. Regular position of company commander - major, platoon

- Captain? One of Pylytsyn's deputies was the former commander of a rifle regiment, former lieutenant colonel S.I. Petrov, who had more than two years of combat experience. The other deputy was the head of the rear of the division, who had made a mistake,

1 See: Kuzmichev I.V. Penal boxes // Sergeant. 2000. No. 1 (14). S. 27.

2 See: Pylytsyn A.V. Free kick, or How an officer's penal battalion reached Berlin. - St. Petersburg: Knowledge, IVESEP, 2003. P. 27.

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also Lieutenant Colonel Shulga. Major artilleryman Bubbles, border guard captain Omelchenko, tank captain Lugovoy were appointed to the positions of squad commanders.

About the battalion commanded by A.V. Poltsyn, writes A. Moroz in the article "Redemption by blood. How the 8th separate penal battalion fought from the Volga to the Oder. He notes that in August 1942, the formation of the 1st and 2nd penal battalions began on the Stalingrad (from September 28, 1942 - Don) Front. However, due to the fact that it was not possible to equip the 2nd penal battalion with a permanent staff, he, by order of the commander of the Don Front, Lieutenant General K.K. Rokossovsky No. 09/0125 of September 30 was disbanded, and its command and political staff (33 people) was sent to form the 1st penal battalion. Decree No. 2/78950 of the Main Organizational and Staff Directorate of the Glavupraform of the Red Army of November 25, 1942 established a single numbering of penal battalions. In accordance with this, the 1st separate penal battalion of the Don Front received the number 8. The permanent composition of the battalion included the commander, military commissar, chief of staff, deputy commander (in combat unit), headquarters commanders and political workers, commanders and political instructors of three rifle companies and a company of anti-tank rifles, platoon commanders, several quartermasters, a military doctor and a military assistant, 6 sergeants and Red Army men (clerk-captain, medical officer, 4 orderlies-porters), a supply platoon and a commandant platoon. On August 15, in the 1st separate penal battalion, there were 95 people permanently

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number of members, 29 of them are overtime until further notice!.

Major General F.A. Kiselev, who was the chief of staff of the 8th separate penal battalion, gives a different composition. "The battalion consisted of constant and variable composition," he writes. — The variable composition included those who arrived in the battalion to serve their sentences for committed offenses (i.e., penalized). The permanent staff included staff officers, commanders of companies, platoons, their deputies for political affairs, foremen of subdivisions, heads of artillery, clothing, food supply, financial allowances and others. The battalion consisted of a headquarters, three rifle companies, a company of submachine gunners, a machine-gun, mortar and anti-tank rifle company, commandant, economic, communications platoons.

On August 8, 1942, the 1st separate penal company began to form in the 57th Army. The staff of the company provided, in addition to the commander and his deputy, to have three platoon commanders, three of their deputies for the combat unit, the head of office work - treasurer and paramedic, military commissar, company agitator and three platoon political instructors. In addition, a representative of the Special Department of the NKVD was seconded to the company, and from April 1943, an operative of the Smersh counterintelligence department. During the war, the permanent officer staff of the company (15 people) was reduced

1 See: Frost A. Redemption by blood. How the 8th separate penal battalion fought from the Volga to the Oder // Krasnaya Zvezda. 2006. June 15.

2 Quot. By: Veteran. 1984. No. 3 (55). 3 See: Moroz A. Penal company // Red Star. April 11, 2007.

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puppy up to 8 people. The permanent composition of junior commanders and privates included: a foreman of the company, a clerk-captain, a sanitary instructor, three platoon orderlies, a driver, two grooms (drivers) and two cooks!

In addition to rifle penal companies and battalions, as the participants in the war recall, penal formations of other types of troops were created. For example, according to I.E. Fedorov, in the fall of 1942, in the 3rd Air Army of the Kalinin Front, a "penal regiment" (42 aircraft) was formed under his command, which allegedly existed for about two months. The instructions to the pilots read: "He is sent to a group of penal fighters." There is no documentary evidence of the existence of an aviation penal regiment. Therefore, it remains to believe or not to believe in the word of I.E. Fedorov. It is alarming that in the second volume of the work "Heroes of the Soviet Union" there is very scarce information about his participation in the war. This fact requires additional research. .

Participants in the war and researchers give various data on the technical equipment of penal companies and battalions. For example, V. Kuleshov in the article "Penal Batya" writes that the regular small arms of penal formations included: for a variable composition - rifles by S.I. Mosin arr. 1891/1930, the permanent staff - submachine guns G.S. Shpagin and V.A. Degtyarev, TT pistols,

1 See: Moroz A. Penal company // Red Star. 2007. April 11.

2 See: Volodchenko V. Commander of heavenly penalty boxes // Trud. 2006. February 21. No. 030.

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revolvers of the Nagant system. In addition, the penitentiaries independently armed themselves with captured automatic weapons (MRAO submachine guns, MS-34 and 42 machine guns) and even company mortars. This made it possible to create freelance machine-gun and mortar crews, where the most reliable fighters were assigned. To perform specific tasks, artillery, mortar and even tank units could be transferred to the operational subordination of the commander of the penal unit. A. Moroz notes that in the 8th separate penal battalion in April-November 1943, the light tank "TG-60" was in service, which the penitentiaries found knocked out near Sevsk, repaired and used for reconnaissance'.

And here is what those who served in penal formations said.

S.L. Aria: "We were armed only with rifles. We didn't have machine guns or machine guns."

N.I. Smirnov: "They gave us machine guns and spared no ammunition. They said: "Take as much as you can take." In addition, everyone was entitled to defensive grenades F-1 and offensive grenades RGD-33. In battle, they armed themselves. The Germans then had Faustpatrons. I taught my subordinates to shoot with them, but they were afraid of getting burned. I had to do it myself"?

D. Debolsky: "We were armed like ordinary arrows

1 Frost A. Redemption by blood. How the 8th separate penal battalion fought from the Volga to the Oder // Krasnaya Zvezda. 2006. June 17.

2 Quot. Quoted from: Rubtsov Yu.V. Penal boxes of the Great Patriotic War. In life and on the screen / Yu.V. Rubtsov. — M.: Veche, 2007. S. 110.

3 Cit. Quoted from: Kuleshov V. Shtrafbatya // Altaiskaya Pravda: 2004. September 17.

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military units: rifles, machine guns, submachine guns!"

V.E. Kopylov: "After Stalin's well-known order No. 227 "Not a step back," panzer assault battalions began to form everywhere. What it is? For clarity, I can give (not very accurately - memory fails) the appearance of a soldier of this unit: a helmet, and over his shoulders - two shields made of thin steel. During the battle, the soldiers lowered these "chain mail" on the lower abdomen (there is no need to explain why). Then they dropped them altogether. Actually, the PSB are the first penal battalions"<sup>2</sup>.

I. Tolstoy's story "People in Cuirasses" tells about the actions of the 2nd separate assault battalion, which the penitentiaries called the "2nd officer's penal battalion". The battalion was sent to the Vyazma region, where the penalists received steel three-millimeter shields, cut and curved according to the figure of a person. The upper part of such a shield covered the chest, and the lower part, attached to the upper one with a flexible joint, protected the stomach. In the removed position, it could serve both as a cover when there was no trench, and as an emphasis for shooting.

In this case, the author writes about the CH-42 steel bib, which was adopted by the Red Army in 1942. It weighed 3.5 kg and satisfactorily protected the chest and part of the abdomen from pistol bullets. Steel breastplates were intended to equip assault engineers

1 Cited. Quoted from: Bakanov V. Truth and Fables. On fines and suicide bombers of the Great Patriotic War // Magnitogorsk metal. 2004. April 29.

2 Quot. Quoted from: Awards drenched in blood (Veteran's Tale) // Military Knowledge. 1996. No. 7 (July). C. 4.

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but-sapper units and subunits. So, according to state No. 012/127, approved by Marshal of the Soviet Union A.M. Vasilevsky on May 31, 1943, a separate assault engineer-sapper battalion had 125 steel bibs per one company in each battalion!.

Servicemen arrived to serve in penal units and subunits in their uniforms, but with badges of distinction worn out and without awards. Persons released early from places of detention were given uniforms for privates without insignia, usually of the 2nd or 3rd category. For the permanent composition of the penal units, uniforms and insignia of the infantry were established.

N.I. Smirnov: "They dressed the penalty box no worse than the rest"<sup>2</sup>?

THEM. Bogatyrev: "My duty was to accept. Here he takes off everything: chrome boots, belt, command uniforms. He changes clothes and tells how he was convicted. It means that he gives me an officer's quarters and becomes a soldier until he atones for his guilt with blood. Either he dies and does not come back, or after being wounded he comes to us to get his former uniform"<sup>3</sup>.

The Regulations on penal battalions and companies noted that the permanent staff (commanders, military

<sup>1</sup> See: Nikiforov N.I. Assault engineer-sapper brigades in the Great Patriotic War: creation and combat use. - M.: Publishing Center of the International Public Fund "Victory - 1945", 1999. P. 87.

<sup>2</sup> Quot. Quoted from: Kuleshov V. Shtrafbatya // Altaiskaya Pravda. 2004. 17 September.

<sup>3</sup> Cit. Quoted from: The Great Patriotic War: 1941-1945. S. 162.

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nye commissars, political officers, etc.) was appointed to the post by order of the troops of the front and the army from among the strong-willed and most distinguished commanders and political workers in battles.

So, M.I. Suknev, who was awarded the Order of Alexander Nevsky, in mid-October 1943, on the recommendation of the command of the 225th Rifle Division, was appointed commander of a separate penal battalion of the 59th Army of the Volkhov Front. Prior to that, Mikhail Ivanovich commanded a rifle battalion of the same division. He was given the right to choose the best company and platoon commanders, as well as non-commissioned officers from the regiments of the division.

According to A. Moroz, the commander of the 8th Separate Penal Battalion had the right to select company and platoon commanders in the Separate Regiment of the Officers' Reserve, as well as expel those who did not justify trust.

On the Trans-Baikal Front, the permanent staff of the 3rd separate penal battalion (previously a separate penal battalion of the Kalinin Front, then the 1st Baltic Front fought under this number) was staffed from among the officers of the 26th district school of snipers, the head of which is Major F.S. Marchenko became the commander of this battalion.

Reserve lieutenant colonel, Hero of the Soviet Union 3.M. Buniyatov in May 1941 graduated from the Baku Infantry School. G.K. Ordzhonikidze, was assigned to the city of Bender, where he met the beginning of the war. In January 1945, the division commander offered him to lead a penal company. True, in the book "Heroes of the Soviet

<sup>1</sup> See: Frost A. Redemption by blood. How the 8th separate penal battalion fought from the Volga to the Oder // Krasnaya Zvezda. 2006. June 15.

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Union" notes that Buniyatov commanded the 123rd separate rifle company in the 5th shock army of the 1st Belorussian Front.

Let us cite a number of memoirs of participants in the war about the circumstances under which they were appointed to the permanent composition of penal battalions and companies.



E.A. Holbreich: "I asked for the penal company myself. A soldier, like an officer, by the way, does not choose his fate in the war: where you are sent, you will go there. But when appointed to a position in a penal company, consent was formally required..."!

I.N. Tretyakov: "I commanded a company in a training battalion when I was summoned to the commander of the 13th Army, General N.P. Pukhov. It was in November 1942. When the commander said that I was being appointed commander of the OSHR, I involuntarily burst out: "What have I done wrong?" (We have heard about penal companies before.) The general replied: "If you had been guilty, you would not have been appointed a commander, but sent as a private." Then he began to say that, they say, you are exchanging a second war (I participated in the battles at Khalkhin Gol in 1939), you recently graduated from college and you are a communist ...  
"2

A.V. Belyaev: "I have been at the front since September 1941," he recalled. - By the end of the Moscow battle, he became chief of staff of a rifle battalion. Wounded. From the hospital he went to courses for the command staff of the Western Front in Podolsk. And from there by order

1 Cited. by: There was no one to replace them. Memoirs of a front-line soldier Efim Abelevich Golbreich // Krymskaya Pravda. 2006. August 23.

2 Quot. Quoted from: Rubtsov Yu.V. To whom to serve a term to the order, but to whom - to the "tower" // Independent military review. 2006. 28 apr

relay. 50

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In the military council of the front, he was appointed assistant chief of staff of the 16th Special Operations Brigade for operational work and fought in its composition until March 1945. I know that the permanent staff consisted mainly of combat, experienced officers. For example, the second (not ours) OShB on the Western, then the 3rd Belorussian Front was commanded by Colonel Yakov Yefimov, the former head of the political department of the 29th Guards Rifle Division. We also had commanders who had gone through battles... Platoon commanders were often appointed from among those who had redeemed their guilt: the most combat-trained, experienced in political educational work, maintaining discipline, military order, and reliable in morally!"

N.I. Smirnov: "Captain Knyazev, the commander of a penal company, came to the army reserve (47th Army. - Comp.) and said that he urgently needed four volunteers. I, like many other young officers, did not hear anything about it then. He told us what we would have to do and with what contingent to work. He defined the tasks as follows: breaking through the defense, reconnaissance in force, sorties at night for "tongues". I, like a real Komsomol member, rushed to the front and did not particularly think about where exactly I would end up. He just waved his hand and agreed. And so it happened - you can say that I gave up on myself then. As soon as they arrived at the place, the first platoon was assigned under my command, and only later, when the commander died, I took command of the company myself.

1 Cited. Quoted from: Rubtsov Yu.V. To whom to serve a term to the order, but to whom - to the "tower" // Independent military review. 2006. April 28.

2 Quot. Quoted from: Kuleshov V. Shtrafbatya // Altaiskaya Pravda. 2004. 17 September.

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The Regulations on penal battalions and companies stated that the term of service in ranks for all permanent staff, in comparison with the command, political and commanding staff of the combat units of the army, is reduced by half, and every month of service in

in penal formations is counted when assigning a pension for six months. Again, let us use the memories of the front-line VIKOV.

I.N. Tretyakov: "What benefits did I have as the commander of a penal company: a) a salary of 1,100 rubles, 5% of the length of service, 20% of field service - a total of 1,375 rubles. The commander of an ordinary rifle company received 750 rubles; b) in one year and three and a half months, they were twice promoted; c) where there was more light, there one had to fight."

A.V. Belyaev: "There is no way to describe everything that I had to go through, I had to be there myself. Suffice it to say that at the age of 23 I became gray-haired. True, in a year and 7 months I was awarded the ranks of captain and major. The incentive for us, officers of the permanent composition of the penal units, who went into battle along with those who atoned for their guilt before the Motherland with blood, was also a double salary, which we, as a rule, gave to the Defense Fund"<sup>2</sup>.

P.D. Barabolya: "The officers who commanded the penal units were not forgotten either. A month of service was counted as six months. Early assignment of titles, generous rewards, special rations, and other things in the same vein were envisaged. In basics

<sup>1</sup> Cited. Quoted from: Rubtsov Yu.V. Penal boxes of the Great Patriotic War. In life and on the screen / Yu.V. Rubtsov. — M.: Veche, 2007. S. 58.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. pp. 58-59. 52

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However, many promises remained on paper. The "special ration", for example, was remembered for frozen canned food and daily pea soup (I still have a strong aversion to this respected dish)...!".

The participants in the war also express various opinions about the variable composition of penal formations.  
opinion.

I.I. Roshchin recalled that for the most part, the fines actually committed military crimes - they deserted during a battle or chickened out at a crucial moment. Once, about thirty sailors from Poti were brought to the penal company, who, having returned from the next trip, went on leave ashore. Here they commemorated their dead comrades, and they did not like the market traders very much - healthy men, whose place in a difficult hour for the Motherland, of course, is not behind the counter, but at the front. Well, the sailors explained it to them in practice, for which they landed under the tribunal - at the suggestion of the local authorities? In the company in which I.I. Roshchin, a former major, head of the military department, was sent. By order of the commander, he sewed chic boots for his girlfriend. The chief of staff of the army demanded even better boots for his girlfriend. But the major had no more material. As a result, he was handed over to the tribunal on a far-fetched pretext. In one of the new additions, there were seven girls - nurses. Everyone retreated - and they fled with

<sup>1</sup> Cited. Quoted from: Living memory. Great Patriotic War: the truth about the war. In Zt. T. 1. S. 360-361.

<sup>2</sup> See: Nekrasova M. Redeem with blood // Guards of Russia. 2004. May. No. 6 (21).

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everyone, until they were stopped by a detachment and - into the penal company!.

P.D. Barabolya: "The first acquaintance with the penalty boxes made a depressing impression. Of course, outwardly they were quite, as they say, normal guys or young, up to thirty years old, men - smiling and wary, gloomy and sly. Most of them are fine

sat a military uniform. Well, just write from other illustrations for the combat charter! However, the "track record" of these people looked completely different. Military tribunals for military or criminal offenses "measured" them severe punishments – from five years to the death penalty. There were seven of the last in the platoon. There was a lot to think about here."

A.I. Bernstein: "The words "penal battalion" or "penalty" from the moment the order appeared became a scarecrow, and later a fashion for senior commanders to remind juniors of their place... Order No. 227 was read out among the troops. At that time, I myself, the captain, engineer of the regiment, explained the order to subordinates in the ranks in relation to the tasks that the regiment was performing: the balloon was not ready to rise and repel enemy air raids, which means you retreated in battle; the combat vehicle refused - you did not follow the order; unauthorized absence, sleeping on duty, loss of weapons or equipment, not to mention crossbows - this is a violation of order No. 227, and hence the tribunal

1 See: Nekrasova M. Redeem with blood // Guards of Russia. 2004. May. No. 6 (21).

2 Quot. Quoted from: Living memory. Great Patriotic War: the truth about the war. In Zt. T. 1. S. 357.

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and, perhaps, a penal battalion or a penal company (to each his own)!

According to N.I. Smirnov, he had under his command military personnel sent to a penal company for various reasons: a gypsy who stole a horse from the regiment commander; Baptist who refused to take up arms?

Colonel General V.M. Shatilov in his memoirs "The Banner over the Reichstag" writes that a cadet of a military school E. Melnikov was sent to a penal company for refusing to hand over a captured camera - a gift from his father, Colonel Melnikov, deputy commander for armored forces 46- th Army of the 3rd Ukrainian Front?.

A.V. Pyltsyn: "The non-staff "chief of staff" (in other words, platoon clerk) was Lieutenant Commander of the Northern Fleet Vinogradov. He was fluent in German, but, oddly enough, it was this knowledge of the enemy's language that brought him to us in SB. Being the head of some division of the naval workshop for the repair of ship radio stations, while checking the repaired radio for reception on different bands, he came across Goebbels' speech. And out of the simplicity of his soul, he began to translate it into Russian in the presence of his subordinates. Someone reported this either to a special department, or to the prosecutor's office, and as a result, Vinogradov received two months in a penal battalion "for aiding the enemy

1 Cited. Quoted from: Rubtsov Yu.V. Penal boxes of the Great Patriotic War. In life and on the screen / Yu.V. Rubtsov. - M.: Veche, 2007. S. 96-97.

2 Quot. Quoted from: Kuleshov V. Shtrafbatya // Altaiskaya Pravda. 2004. 17 September.

3 See: Shatilov V.M. Banner over the Reichstag. 3rd edition, corrected and enlarged. M.: Voenizdat, 1975. S. 39-40.

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propaganda"... And I took him to me in this capacity because he possessed an almost calligraphic handwriting, besides, he could fit as a translator, although I myself knew German relatively well"".

I. Suman: "I was not lucky in the army with the commander - he was a rare bastard. He disliked me terribly, he said directly: "You Moldavians have been drinking wine since childhood, that's why everyone is so stupid." In war, quarreling with the commander is a disastrous thing. And here, even after the battle, in my hearts, take it and praise the Germans aloud for a good machine gun. With us, you understand, in order to change the red-hot barrel of a light machine gun during a battle, it took about five minutes. During this time, you could have been killed five times. And in the German one, the lever turned, the spring threw the barrel out, put on a new one and after 30 seconds - you are in battle. In general, I could not restrain myself, and the commander was behind. This case ended with a penal company. It was possible to sit down and write a funeral for yourself at home"?

The English historian E. Beevor writes in his book "Stalingrad": "Commanders who allowed a retreat were immediately stripped of their ranks and sent to penal companies and battalions. The first such battalion appeared on the Stalingrad front three weeks later, on August 22, the day before the German troops reached the Volga... enemy environment. The first group of 58 people were told they would be sent

1 Cited. Quoted from: Pylytsyn A.V. Free kick, or How an officer's penal battalion reached Berlin. - St. Petersburg: Knowledge, IVESEP, 2003. P. 55.

2 Quot. Quoted from: Volynets A. Different faces of the war // Nevskoe Vremya No. 154 (1557). 1997. August 28.

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on a commission, after which they will be sent to new parts. But no one began to interrogate the officers, and soon, without trial or investigation, they all ended up in penal companies. When a couple of months later it turned out that this was someone's unfortunate mistake, most of the officers had already died. .

Lawfulness when sent to penal subdivisions and units was not always respected. Military prosecutors, exercising supervision over the penal units, revealed many facts when a soldier or sergeant was sent to the penitentiary for minor offenses ("moving in the ranks", "cooking a poor-quality dinner", etc.). "But here it was rather not the severity of the law that played a role," notes A.V. Pylytsyn, as it was in many cases of the penalized, but the "snitching" that prevailed at that time and the hypertrophied suspiciousness of some bosses. At that time, accidental people who made the most common mistakes, miscalculations, without which there is not a single serious business, suffered many times more from this. It was the rule to find, and in extreme cases, to invent, a specific culprit, the defendant, despite the fact that not even people, but circumstances are to blame.

The variable composition of the penal units was also staffed from among the military personnel who committed the theft of property, food and other acts not related to the performance of combat missions. So, in November 1942, the military prosecutor's office of Mos

1 Cited. Quoted from: Beevor E. Stalingrad / Per. from English. A. Zherebilova, A. Konopleva, A. Marchenko, A. Feldsherov; artist P. Trofimov. - Smolensk: Rusich, 1999. S. 107.

2 Quot. Quoted from: Pylytsyn A.V. Free kick, or How an officer's penal battalion reached Berlin. S. 38.

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kovskoy defense zone brought to criminal responsibility the servicemen of the 27th separate artillery and machine-gun battalion, who, as follows from the accusation, "by prior conspiracy, systematically abused their official position for mercenary purposes, i.e. they drank together, and for snacks they took food belonging to the fighters, this aroused discontent among the personnel." 12 January 1943 20th District Tribunal

airbase of the Western Front in an open court hearing considered the case of these servicemen. At the same time, one of the defendants was sent to a penal battalion, and the other to a penal company!

I. Pichugin: "In our 3rd Army, commanded by General Alexander Vasilievich Gorbato, we had three penal companies, each with 350 men. There are four platoons in a company. Different people ended up in these military units: thieves, bandits, recidivists who arrived from prisons and camps with their own traditions and laws, which they were not going to forget here (especially with weapons in their hands). But there were also those who accidentally stumbled, and sometimes innocently injured, slandered"<sup>2</sup>.

Honored Art Worker, Candidate of Art History I.P. Gorin was arrested in the winter of 1944 for forging bread cards and sentenced, taking into account the previous conviction, which remained from the orphanage youth, to five years in the camps. "In the Kovrov transfer, I asked to replace my term with a penal ba

1 See: V.P. Krikunov. Penal boxes (Fictions and documents of the special services of Goebbels on the Soviet screen) // Military Historical Journal. 1990. No. 6. S. 67.

2 Quot. Cited from: Pichugin I. "Penal battalions go into the breakthrough" // Krymskiye Izvestiya. No. 109 (3583). 2006. June 17.

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talion, - Ivan Petrovich recalled. "They didn't give political weapons - they didn't trust them, but I went for fraud, and they replaced me ..."!

Employees of special departments were also imprisoned. So, by order of the People's Commissar of Defense I.V. Stalin No. 0089 dated May 31, 1943, for "perversions and criminal errors" in the investigative work of the special department of the 7th separate army, investigators Sedogin, Izotov and Solovyov, who were dismissed from the bodies, were sent to a penal battalion under the head Rear of the Red Army<sup>2</sup>.

M.I. Suknev: "Among them are officers from junior lieutenant to senior (there were no captains) - about one hundred and fifty people, all convicted for "violations of military discipline", for fights, "adultery", for drowning a tank, heading "along the way" to village to familiar girls, etc. And even from our troops in Afghanistan, two lieutenants came to me who had a fight in the apartment of an elderly regiment commander because of his loving young wife. The lieutenants were given from one to three months of a penalty... The 2nd company was formed from 200 Gavriks - Odessa and Rostov recidivists, who were replaced by a penal battalion with long terms of serving sentences in prisons and camps. Several were brought with sentences to death - shooting... The 3rd company - Basmachi, 200 people of Talzhiks, Turkmens and from somewhere else from Central Asia..."<sup>3</sup>

1 Cited. Quoted from: Babchenko A. Fraudster from the penal battalion // Novaya Gazeta. 2005. September 26.

2 See: Russian archive: Great Patriotic. Orders of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR 1943-1945, Vol. 13 (2-3). S. 170.

3 Cit. Quoted from: Suknev M.I. Notes of the commander of the penal battalion. Memoirs of a battalion commander. 1941-1945. - M.: ZAO Tsentrpoligraf, 2007. S. 150 - 151.

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This memory is refuted by the words of V.V. Karpova: "The film ("Penal Battalion." — Comp.) shows a penal battalion, which brings together criminals, political, and private soldiers who have been fined. This did not happen and could not happen... The rank-and-file, as well as criminals, political prisoners who expressed a desire to fight, were sent to separate penal companies. Such companies were not included in the penal battalion, but were attached to rifle regiments.

According to A. Moroz, the variable composition of the 8th separate penal battalion was staffed by servicemen convicted of various violations. Among them are former chiefs of staff of a division and a tank brigade, head of the political department of a rifle brigade, military commissars of a division, tank and rifle brigades, 12 regiment commanders, 5 battalion commanders, 40 company and battery commanders, 26 political officers, 81 platoon, 4 air unit commanders, 2 squadron navigators, 8 aircraft technicians, 2 flight mechanics, heads of the hospital, warehouse of the People's Commissariat of Defense, military department, club, etc.

One of the sources of manning the penal units were the Red Army soldiers who were captured by the Germans, the encircled, who fell behind during the retreat from their troops and remained in the occupied territory.

A. Moroz in the article "Penal Company" also writes: "Those who, during the retreat of the Red Army in the first weeks and months of the war, deserted and settled on the Okku were sent to penal companies in an inexhaustible stream.

1 Cited. by: Labor. 2004. October 14.

2 See; Frost A. Redemption by blood. How the 8th separate penal battalion fought from the Volga to the Oder // Krasnaya Zvezda. 2006. June 16.

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the enemy's territory, as well as partially liberated from enemy captivity. If a straggler from the army, under dubious circumstances, did not attempt to get out to his own, but did not cooperate with the occupation authorities, then he was sent to a penal company for one month. Those who served as elders under the Germans received two months as policemen. And those who served in the German army or in the so-called Russian Liberation Army (ROA), the traitor Vlasov had three!

A.V. Pylytsyn: "There was also a significant contingent of former officers who were surrounded in the first years of the war, who were in the occupied territory and did not participate in the partisan movement (we called them the common word "encirclement"). There were also a small number of former prisoners of war officers liberated by our troops from German concentration camps or who had escaped from them and passed the appropriate checks in the Smersh authorities ("Death to Spies"). Policemen and other accomplices of the enemy were not sent to the battalion. They were destined for a different fate."

For example, all those who had been in German captivity were checked on the 1st Belorussian Front by a commission consisting of a chairman (representative of the political department of the front) and two members (senior counterintelligence officer Smersh at the 29th Separate Regiment of the officer reserve and deputy commander of this regiment on politics). So, according to Protocol No. 61

1 Cited. by Moroz A. Penal company // Red Star. 2007. || April.

2 Quot. Quoted from: Pylytsyn A.V. Free kick, or How an officer's penal battalion reached Berlin. - St. Petersburg: Knowledge, IVESEP, 2003. P. 29.

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dated May 16, 1944, 52 people were sent to the 8th separate penal battalion!

N.G. Gudoshnikov: "I must say that the formation of penal companies in our 40th Army after the battle on the Kursk Bulge proceeded quite quickly. The main replenishment was provided by deserters. Where did they come from? In the spring of 1942, as a result of a successful but ill-conceived offensive of our troops up to Kharkov, a large number of the male population remaining there was called up from the vacated places by the field military registration and enlistment offices at the reserve regiments. For example, only about 12,000 reservists were mobilized from the Graivoronsky district alone. However, our troops did not hold their positions and began to retreat, taking recruits with them. During the turmoil, many fled to their huts, which ended up on enemy territory. After the Kursk Bulge, the 40th Army again advanced in the same places, the field military registration and enlistment offices were again working, and the deserters turned out to be called up again. The previous documentation on them was preserved, so it was not difficult to establish the fact of the crime. He was sentenced to 3 months in a penal company, which corresponded to 10 years in prison. This is how a team of 200-250 people was recruited and transferred to the OSR"2.

I.I. Korzhik: "In September 1943, after the liberation of Pereyaslav by our troops, our partisan detachment named after Chapaev was disbanded. Part of the partisans went to the west, and we, A few dozens

1 Frost A. Redemption by blood. How the 8th separate penal battalion fought from the Volga to the Oder // Krasnaya Zvezda. 2006. June 17.

2 Quot. Quoted from: Rubtsov Yu.V. To whom to serve a term to the order, but to whom - to the "tower" // Independent military review. 2006. April 28.

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officers were sent to Ryazan, as it turned out later, for a special check. And then everyone - to the penal battalion. All of us, from junior lieutenant to colonel, at one time were surrounded in the Kyiv region. What was our fault? That they didn't get shot. After a three-month check, everyone turned out to be "clean" - they did not cooperate with the Germans, they were not traitors to the Motherland. It would seem that people should simply be sent to military units according to their specialty, but... There were 1,200 officers in the battalion, including 25 colonels, who were made privates in their old age. We were all given Red Army books."

E.A. Holbreich: "Why were you sent to a penal company? Failure to comply with an order, manifestation of cowardice in battle, insulting a senior commander, fighting, theft, looting, AWOL, or maybe just a PZh {field wife. — Comp.) of the regiment commander did not like it, and so on and so forth... A train of criminals arrives from the rear, four hundred or more people, and the company immediately becomes a battalion, continuing to be called a company. The convoy troops accompany the criminals, who hand them over to us according to the act ... What kind of people? There are bandits, and recidivist criminals, and those hiding from the draft, and deserters, and just thieves. It happened that from the rear came and unfair victims. Being late for work for more than twenty minutes was considered absenteeism, they were judged for absenteeism, and the term could be replaced by a penal company. With one of the echelons, a teenager arrived, almost a boy, so, at least, it seemed ...

1 Cited. Quoted from: Rubtsov Yu.V. To whom to serve a term to the order, but to whom - to the "tower" // Independent military review. 2006. April 28.

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officers demoted by the verdict of a military tribunal!

M.G. Klyuchko: "They also got caught for desertion. There were cases and just funny. I remember one was sent to us only because the commander did not like that the soldier had the same beard as his own, which led to a conflict. With the issuance of Order No. 227, the commander could get an objectionable soldier sent to a penal company. In this regard, there were no problems with personnel in penal battalions and penal companies"<sup>2</sup>.

P.S. Amosov: "I was in the 15th penal battalion

Sent by order of the front commander Konev in such a way that even the commander of our unit did not immediately know about it. The order read: "For negligence..." In part — and we were then operating in the Krivoy Rog direction — I handed in my Komsomol membership card and other documents. The new identity card was simply typed on a typewriter. The mood was heavy. But it turned out to be nothing, you can live in the OShB, and there people are like people - they both joke and mourn. I was the youngest in the penitentiary. I landed there because of the death of the head of the political department of our 37th Army, Colonel Yemelyanov. The fact is that the German went on the counter-offensive, our units retreated. At that moment, in the Nedayvod area, I equipped a minefield away from the road, laid German anti-tank mines with tension fuses (there were no others). Having received inaccurate data on the location of the baking sheet

1 Cited. by: There was no one to replace them. Memoirs of a front-line soldier Yefim Abelevich Golbreich // Krymskaya Pravda. 2006. August 23.

2 Quot. Quoted from: Savchin D. Penal boxes did not shout "Hurrah!" // Mirror of the week. No. 20 (293). 2000. 20 - 26 May.

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ka, Colonel Yemelyanov on the "jeep" slipped past us in the direction of the enemy. Mina worked ... "!

G.M. Dubinin: "They didn't show me the order to send me to the penalty area and didn't read it out. I am a sergeant, a recent graduate of the Serpukhov Aviation School, served as an aircraft technician in the 3rd Squadron of the 16th Reserve Fighter Aviation Regiment stationed in the Saratov Region. My Yak-7B plane crashed on landing with an instructor pilot and a young pilot in February 1944. The commission established that the accident occurred through the fault of the instructor (the belt of his jacket got into the ball bearing of the control rods, and the car "pecked" sharply). But they still found the "switchman" ... "?

O.P. Budnichuk recalled that the soldiers of the reconnaissance company, which he commanded, held a wake for the previously killed commander and a meeting for the new commander. A cow was driven away from the partisans, slaughtered, roasted. Budnichuk refused to follow Lieutenant Colonel Polyansky's order to put a cow's leg in his car. Soon a special department accused Budnichuk of looting and sent him to the penal battalion. The second time Budnichuk ended up in a penal battalion after an unsuccessful reconnaissance in force, carried out according to the plan of a major from the division headquarters, the nephew of the head of reconnaissance?

A.V. Soroka: "I quarreled with the company commander: I made boots for myself out of junk (my father was

1 Cited. Quoted from: Rubtsov Yu.V. To whom to serve a term to the order, but to whom - to the "tower" // Independent military review. 2006. 28 apr

relay. 2 Ibid.



3 See: Swede E. Shtrafbat // Motherland. 1991. No. 6-7. pp. 62-63. 65

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shoemaker-orthopedist), and he wanted to take them away from me and give them to another cadet. The commander sent me to a penal company, however, also near Petropavlovsk, to serve the airfield - all work is underground.

V. Kondratiev in the article "Pariahs of War" states: "Yes, the military tribunals didn't really understand all these cases - not for ten years, but before the "first blood", and you're not used to war, then it's up to someone yet, you can get off with a scratch, but - redeemed ... But not only from here is the ease with which sentences were passed, there is something else here, that pre-war practice of our bodies, when for a nail taken out of the factory, for an ear of rye, plucked in the field, they were given monstrous terms. What was needed was an army of free labor that could be sent anywhere and to the most difficult work..."<sup>2</sup>

M.G. Klyuchko: "The decision to form the 322nd penal company under our army was made. But only when the staff of officers was fully staffed did the rank and file from the Moscow prisons - Butyrskaya and Stromynka - begin to come to us. These were those who were allowed to atone for their guilt before Soviet society with their blood. The total strength of the company was about 300 people. There were two officers for each platoon"<sup>3</sup>.

I.N. Tretyakov: "During the year and three months of my service as the commander of a penal company, I had to form and fight with nine sets of 250 to 560 people. The contingent came from convicted

<sup>1</sup> Cited. Quoted from: Vishnevskaya S. Started the war in a penal company, and ended up as a real artist... // Mgto. 2007. 9 July.

<sup>2</sup> Quot. by: Literary newspaper. 1990. January 31.

<sup>3</sup> Cit. Quoted from: Savchin D. Penalties did not shout "Hurrah // Mirror of the Week. No. 20 (293). 2000. May 20-26.

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#### Penal formations during the Great Patriotic War

nyh. The commander, in accordance with the regulations, determined the term: a sentence of up to 5 years - | 1 month of penalty, up to 7 years - 2 months, up to 10 years - 3 months. The contingent came from Moscow - from the Taganskaya prison, from the transfer to Stromynka - 7 sets; one set is from Transcaucasia; one more - policemen and elders from the Oryol and Kursk regions... There were demoted commanders in the penal company. After serving the sentence, the command filed a petition, they were awarded the rank and left in the company as platoon commanders!

M.S. Brovko: "After graduating from a technical school, I worked in Perm (then Molotov, Western Urals) at a gunpowder factory. I tested the charges of the famous Katyushas, aircraft rockets, charges of all calibers of mortars and artillery - I am a powder dynamite by profession. Once there was an accident in my shift - a woman died. Me and another worker were sentenced to five years in prison. But this punishment was replaced by a penal company"<sup>2</sup>?

V.E. Kopylov: "There is a widespread opinion that penal battalions were entirely and completely (of course, except for officers) formed from former criminals. Nonsense! Personally, I have never seen such units... Who got into my penal battalion? Confused in a combat situation, people, in one fell swoop enlisted as deserters. There were also serious violators of military discipline. Rarely, but there were also "crossbows"..."<sup>3</sup> |

1 Cited. Quoted from: Rubtsov Yu. V. Who will serve a term to the order, but to whom - to the "tower" // Independent military review. 2006. April 28.

2 Quot. Quoted from: Ermishina L. Visiting... // Priazovsky worker. No. 64. 2007. July 4.

3 Cit. Quoted from: Awards drenched in blood (Veteran's Tale) // Military Knowledge. 1996. No. 7 (July). C. 4.

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N.I. Ryabtsovsky, who commanded the 614th separate penal company in October 1944, recalled: "A penal company is the expiation of the crime for which he came here, with blood. Stupid, I'll tell you, there was a theorem. There were also bad people in the company, but basically it consisted of soldiers and officers devoted to the Motherland, who accidentally got into everyday trouble!

A. Gordievsky expressed his point of view on the use of former prisoners in penal units and divisions. "The creation of penal units could not lead to additional release of prisoners," he writes. — Those convicted of serious political and criminal offenses were not subject to release. Convicted for minor crimes, who were fit to serve in the army, by the time the penal units were created, they were already at large and fought in regular units. Only by decrees of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR of July 12, August 10 and November 24, 1941, more than 750,000 people were released from places of deprivation of liberty, in 1942 - another 157,000. As a rule, they were sent to penal companies did not direct. Volunteers have never been sent to penal wards. And I would like to emphasize: criminals from places of deprivation of liberty were never sent to penal battalions."

K. Kovalev, in his article "Penal Brad", evaluating the film "Penal Battalion", writes: "As a former political prisoner, I did not immediately believe in this nonsense: I talked with many old political prisoners, anti-communists, and they all claimed that political prisoners from the camps on front, as it really was with criminals and household

1 Cited. Quoted from: Oreshet M. G. Orphaned Shores. Petrozavodsk, 1998.

2 Quot. Quoted from: A. Gordievsky. Truth of war // Teacher's newspaper. No. 05 (10,034). 2005. August 2.

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kami, were not sent in any way, although many of them asked to go there. The exception was political prisoners of another category: those who were first rehabilitated, "suddenly" finding out that they were not guilty of anything, and only then sent to the front, and not at all to penal battalions, but to normal units, returning their ranks and entrusted with responsible positions. But there was no simple replacement of the camp by a front for political prisoners. Therefore, all the disputes between a Stalinist and a Trotskyist presented in the series, which were later reconciled only by death on the battlefield, are a big lie in the spirit of Goebbels, a lie, the purpose of which is to present the beliefs of both one and the other in the form of nonsense, alien to "normal - nomu person", that is, the layman, the bourgeois. These people were simply not even in the penal battalion at the front." Yu.V. Rubtsov, author of the book Penal Boxes of the Great Patriotic War. According to the regulations, those sentenced to deprivation of liberty for up to three and more than three years were to be held separately: the first - in corrective labor colonies (CIT), the second - in corrective labor camps (ITL). GULAG V. G. Nasedkin, in September 1943, the ITK contained "over 500 thousand prisoners sentenced to terms of more than 3 years, including for such crimes as treason, counter-revolutionary and especially dangerous", about 50 thousand sentenced to terms of less than 3 years turned out to be in ITL?2 "With a high degree of probability

1 Cited. Quoted from: Kovalev K. Penalty // Lightning. 2004, October. No. 19 (321).

2 See: Ivashov L.G., Emelin A.S. The Gulag Archipelago: 1941-1945 // Library of the Red Star. No. 12 (540). - M.: 1990. S. 33-34.

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can be argued, - writes Yu.V. Rubtsov, "that such an unprecedented "mixing" allowed some part of the criminals to be released early through mobilization into the active army or sent to penal units, which would have been impossible under other conditions!"

Penal formations, recruited mainly from among military personnel of various military specialties, if there was time, underwent the necessary training for the upcoming military operations. Information about this can be found in the memoirs of veterans.

A.V. Pylytsyn: "Upon arrival in Gorodets, for a long time we were engaged in receiving reinforcements, forming, arming and putting together units. Combat training was established, the main goal was to train former pilots, quartermasters, artillerymen and other specialists to fight as infantry, which means to make strenuous marches, crawl, dig in, overcome trenches and ditches, and also to conduct well-aimed fire from assault rifles, machine guns, anti-tank rifles, and even from captured Faustpatrons. But perhaps the most difficult, especially in psychological terms, was to overcome the fear of some trainees before throwing live grenades, especially F-1 grenades. The lethal force of its fragments was maintained up to 200 meters, and even a trained person could throw this hand-held projectile only 50-60 meters. The training took place on combat (not training!) grenades that explode for real! True, they had to be thrown from the eye

1 Cited. Quoted from: Rubtsov Yu.V. Penal boxes of the Great Patriotic War. In life and on the screen / Yu.V. Rubtsov. — M.: Veche, 2007. S. 76.

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pa. But not everyone was able to overcome the fear and not immediately!

P.D. Barabolya: "For others, machine guns and anti-tank rifles were unfamiliar. I had to explain the basics and wisdom of owning weapons, to teach everything that is indispensable in battle... Be that as it may, in the two weeks that we were allowed to form and some additional training of personnel, I learned a lot about his new subordinates and was finally convinced: no, they are not lost people.

In a brief summary of the generalized combat experience of the operational department of the headquarters of the 8th Guards Army on the fighting in the Berlin operation of May 10, 1945, it was noted that the units that conducted reconnaissance in combat, including penal ones, underwent special al training. For this purpose, penal companies were withdrawn to the eastern bank of the river. Oder?.

The former penitentiaries themselves testify to how food and domestic services of a variable composition were established, as well as to the relationship between the contingent of penal units and subunits.

I.P. Gorin noted that two hundred grams of bread and a bowl of gruel were given a day. They lived in barracks that were blown through. They wore some kind of tattered, slept on bunks covered with straw ... 4

1 Cited. Quoted from: Pylytsyn A.V. Free kick, or How an officer's penal battalion reached Berlin. - St. Petersburg: Knowledge, IVESEP, 2003. S. 50-51.

2 Quot. Quoted from: Living memory. Great Patriotic War: the truth about the war. In Zt. T. 1. S. 358.

3 See: Russian archive: Great Patriotic War: Battle for Berlin (Red Army in defeated Germany): Vol. 15 (4-5). — M.: TERRA, 1995. S. 463.

4 See: Babchenko A. Fraudster from the penal battalion // Novaya Gazeta. 2005. September 26.

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M.G. Klyuchko: "It is not true that the penalty box went on the attack under the influence of alcohol. Usually they went hungry. It happened that for two days there was not a crumb in the mouth. Water was boiled and drunk. After the bombing, at night they climbed along the front line in search of dead horses or other animals. Near Melitopol or Mariupol, I don't remember exactly, in one village we spent half a day. The hostess treated us to real Ukrainian borscht. So after that, I writhed for days from pain in my stomach. Maybe it was different in other departments. Don't know. But I'm talking about what happened to myself and those who served with me.

P.S. Khomenko: "I did not notice among my fighters the usual soldier, as they say, front-line friendship. After all, everyone dreamed of staying alive and quickly freeing himself, leaving the company. And the attitude towards me as a commander was rather alienated, not the one I was used to, having previously commanded a company and a battalion"2.

A. Moroz notes that in the 8th separate penal battalion of the Don Front, the daily routine provided for 10 hours of classes. Dinner was not included in the schedule, hot food from August 15 to November 27, 1942 was prepared only for breakfast and lunch, and half of the flour was unsuitable for baking bread, there was no salt, only cucumbers and tomatoes were available from vegetables.

1 Cited. Quoted from: Rubtsov Yu.V. Penal boxes of the Great Patriotic War. In life and on the screen / Yu.V. Rubtsov. — M.: Veche, 2007. S. 126.

2 Quot. By; Lebedev P. Penal boxes // Republic of Tatarstan. No. 202. 2004. October 5.

3 See: Frost A. Redemption by blood. How the 8th separate penal battalion fought from the Volga to the Oder // Krasnaya Zvezda. 2006. June 16.

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However, there is other evidence that differs from those given above.

N.I. Smirnov: "They did not offend the penalty box, they understood that they were not tenants. They fed well too. The kitchen was self-sufficient: either we take a pig from the locals and slaughter it, or a cow. They dressed the penalty box no worse than the rest!

E.A. Holbreich: "An ordinary company receives allowances from a battalion, a battalion from a regiment, a regiment from the divisional warehouses, and a division from the army ... In all instances, they will steal something. Completely nothing reaches the soldier. And here, oddly enough, there is no one to steal. And here the WORD "army" comes into force. Our sergeant-major receives his allowance directly from the army depots. True, they "look into his hands" too. The norms are not poor, we will bring something from the trophies. The foreman receives the products completely and of good quality, undiluted vodka. The officers will be provided with short coats, long and not cloth breeches, but chic blue wool breeches. And the uniforms for the fined will receive not the last term, but quite

decent. In addition, we have unaccounted for horses, instead of twelve horses - a small herd. If necessary, we slaughter a younger horse, and what's your deal! Let's plow a garden for someone. Yes, another important factor. In addition to the eternal Russian pity for the suffering prisoner, every rear quartermaster was always afraid of someday "roaring into the penalty area." Provided us honestly.

1 Cited. Quoted from: Kuleshov V. Shtrafbatya // Altaiskaya Pravda. 2004. 17 September.

2 Quot. by: There was no one to replace them. Memoirs of a front-line soldier Yefim Abelevich Golbreich // Krymskaya Pravda. 2006. August 23.

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A.V. Pylytsyn: "Food captured from the Germans, as far as possible, replenished their meager dry rations, which were almost gone. We were especially surprised by the trophy bread, sealed in a transparent film with the marked year of manufacture: 1937-1938.

How many years it was stored, and you could even cut and eat frozen! Do not compare with our crackers. We were equally surprised by some hybrid of ersatz honey with butter in large briquettes. Sandwiches from this bread with such honey butter were very welcome.

and turned out to be quite satisfying.

In food trophies there was also a lot of chocolate, which also well reinforced our forces, completely weakened from physical and nervous overexertion... Despite the fact that it was already the beginning of March, nature broke out with such a and fell for several days) that as soon as we arrived in the designated area, all the roads and access roads became simply impassable, and not just impassable. And for a whole week we were even cut off from our battalion rear. As our wits used to say, the weather then was "dietary".

For almost a week, due to the fact that it was impossible to bring food, our daily three-time hot meal ration consisted of snow melted in camp kitchens (that's what there was no shortage of!) And the "broth" prepared from it, which, in addition to boiling water, contained quite rarely found fat and some inclusions from American pork stew (1 can per company!), which we then called the "Second Front". Breadcrumbs were added to this.

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And there is no way to spice up this "dietary" dish with something!

Disciplinary practice, military service, political and educational work in penal formations were carried out practically on the same basis as in other parts of the army.

A.V. Pylytsyn: "It should be noted that in ... a relatively long defensive period of hostilities, both the supply, the work of the field mail, and all kinds of information were well established. Even the central newspapers Pravda, Zvezdochka (as Krasnaya Zvezda was called), Komsomolskaya Pravda and others were regularly delivered to us, albeit in small quantities, and letters even from the distant rear came (to me, for example, from a mother and sister from the Far East), although sometimes with a significant delay, but always reliably"2?.

I.N. Tretyakov: "Service and everyday life were organized in accordance with the charters, political and educational work was carried out, as usual in army conditions. Reproaches to the fighters from the commanders that

they, they say, convicted and are in the penalty area, were not allowed. They addressed in the authorized way: "Comrade fighter (soldier)". The food was the same as in the usual parts. For non-execution of an order, self-mutilation, escape from the battlefield or an attempt to go over to the enemy, the command and political staff of the penal unit had the right and was obliged to apply all measures of influence, up to execution on the spot"<sup>3</sup>.

1 Cited. Quoted from: Pylytsyn A.V. Free kick, or How an officer's penal battalion reached Berlin. pp. 39, 48-49.

2 Ibid. S. 68.

3 Cit. Quoted from: Rubtsov Yu.V. To whom to serve a term to the order, but to whom - to the "tower" // Independent military review. 2006. April 28.

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N.G. Gudoshnikov: "It fell to my lot to command a platoon in a separate penal company for more than a year. And, of course, I know quite well the essence of this division. It must be said that it almost did not differ from the usual one: the same discipline, the same order, the same relations between the soldiers penalized and officers. It may seem strange to some, but they addressed me and other commanders in the official way: "Comrade Lieutenant", and not in the camp way: "Citizen Chief", I have never heard such a thing. They supplied weapons and food, as it should be... We did not apply any special disciplinary or other sanctions to the penalized, except for the statutory ones. I often even forgot that I was not in command of an ordinary unit!

M.G. Klyuchko: "To show by my attitude that I am superior to them meant not to return alive after the very first battle... There could be no other relations, except for respectful ones, at the front. After all, by and large, everyone depended on each other. There was a strict law: in battle, you must support a comrade with fire when he makes a dash. If you don't do this, you won't live."

Recent publications make it possible not only to answer the question of how penal units and subunits were formed, but also how many there were during the Great Patriotic War. According to the work "Russia and the USSR in the Wars of the 20th Century: A Statistical Study", by the end of 1942, the Red Army had

1 Cited. Quoted from: Rubtsov Yu.V. Penal boxes of the Great Patriotic War. In life and on the screen / Yu.V. Rubtsov. - M.: Veche, 2007. S. 113-114.

2 Quot. Quoted from: Savchin D. Penal boxes did not shout "Hurrah!" // Mirror of the week. No. 20 (293). 2000. 20-26 May.

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24,993 penalties were counted. In 1943 their number increased to 177,694, in 1944 it decreased to 143,457, and in 1945 to 81,766. In total, during the Great Patriotic War, 427,910 people were sent to penal companies and battalions.

By the beginning of the war, there were 4,826,907 people in the Armed Forces of the USSR. In addition, there were 74,945 people in the formations of other departments that were on allowance in the People's Commissariat of Defense. During the four years of the war, another 29,574,900 people were mobilized (excluding those re-conscripted), including 805,264 people who were at the "Big Training Camp". Thus, during the war, 34,476,752 people were called up?. Every year, 10.5-11.5 million people were in service (consisted according to the list), half of which (5.25-5.75 million) were

service in the active army. Consequently, the penalties were: in relation to the total number of those called up 1.2%, in relation to those who were in service annually - 4-3.7%, and in relation to those who served in the army - 8.1- 7.4%.

During the Great Patriotic War, 65 separate penal battalions and 1028 penal companies were formed; a total of 1093 penal subdivisions and units. Their number at various stages of the Great Patriotic War is presented in Table No. 1, compiled on the basis of the combat schedule of penal units. 35 separate penal battalions were created in the fronts, 1 in groups of troops, 16 in armies. In addition, there were 11 separate penal battalions. Separate free kicks

1 See: Russia and the USSR in the wars of the twentieth century: Statistical research. S. 441.

2Ibid. S. 245. 77

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Table No. 1

#### THE NUMBER OF PENALTY BATTALIONS AND COMPANIES OPERATING ON THE FRONTS OF THE GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR

|| E . |

| : Apr 2 E | Gly | E i V V E 2 | | ] mi ] m in yy | [= ? MIRO O-o OI E O-AE: | | xia © oo sho © a | O ZON IN IO CH |  
— + — r op OR | 1942 16 | - | - 1212-83 } u u u | fights => --- = | — 7 Pi Pimvia r 1942—1943 4 | - | 1291 - [ | 134 =  
And | About Sing OOV Eeyore. 7-t 7 G 7 1942-1944 5 O-o 28: | t Eee | 1942 —1945 oo 5 | 99: her m A o + - 1 ---  
since 1943 81-115 -|E 4 1 253 | — | 2801 1944 a 1% | | | -- -- ——— + | 1043—1945 94 | yu-E -== = + +  
— + o eee 1944 non | | 7: from - - - you t . 1944-1945 | || 116 | — | 138 pp I I  
. = - 1945 and Yu. g E t Total: 611611212. 6 110201 1 11093

Order No. 227 required the formation of 5 to 10 penal companies in each army. Using the example of 1942 (table No. 2), let's see how this requirement was fulfilled. An analysis of the table shows that only in 6 out of 54 armies, point 2 of the order was fulfilled. Moreover, in the 24th, 46th and 64th armies it was created according to

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5 penal companies, in the 51st - 6, in the 18th and 44th armies - 7 penal companies each. The 54th Army went even further, forming 17 penal companies. And in the 7th separate army, a separate penal company was created for senior and middle command personnel.

Table number 2

#### SEPARATE PENALTY COMPANIES OF THE ARMIES IN 1942

Name

| | armies Name of separate penal companies , Total 1st Guards Separate penal companies. companies at 1, -153, 3) Army 1203-th SD `1st shock | 'army | 1st, 2nd, 3rd separate penal companies 3 t - -- - + - 3rd Guards | Separate free kicks | companies at 1, 153, 3 army | 203-1st SD |  
ankomya - oh ona , Separate penal company I and. : II - 3rd shock - I separate penalty p  
company (at the 33rd division); 2 army! 3rd separate penal company 4th army 1,2, 4th separate penal company G  
3 = . - = 1 --- -. :. 1 ,4th armored | 1st, 2nd separate penal companies 2 `army` tr. r ine - ode to ana a. 4th shock  
army {Separate penal company 1 5th tank army Separate penal

company : 1 | 6th army 1st, 2nd - separate penal companies | 2 | | "Separate penal company for senior | 7th  
 separate | middle command staff; Separate penal 4 | army [company for private and junior command personnel; | 12, 3rd  
 separate penal company p: - - 2-7 ^ separate penal company (at 417th SD); R 9th Army: oe == - 1st p  
 2nd separate penal company (at 351st SD): B

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Name | Name of individual penal companies Total armies | , Separate penal companies at the 31st Guards, 10th  
 Army, Deiskaya, 90th Rifle Division 2: 11th Army: Separate - penal company; s: 1, 2nd separate | 3rd penal companies:  
 1 12th Army 1, 2, 4th separate penal companies 3 not o.-  
 --- and ne - + "- 14th Army Separate penal company at 1 16th Army Separate penal company;  
 1, 2nd separate w | | 'penal companies | | 18th Army | 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 84th, 85th, 86th separate penalties | 7: companies  
 - -- --,= \_ - - =: = th: 19th army: Separate - penal company \_ | 1 : p ---- No-f | | 20th Army Separate penal company;  
 1, 2, 3. I separate 4 | R. nye 'penal companies : | 22nd Army Separate penal company a (with 185th s! 1 | 23rd  
 army ': Separate penal company 1.24th army p, 2, 3, 4, 5th separate penal companies 5 | :27- -I army t, 3rd separate  
 penal companies 2 1  
 \_ + - I army Separate penal company | 1 Al 17 7 - 7 s 1 29th Army 1, 2nd separate penal companies  
 \_ 2 [30th Army [Separate penal company; 2nd, 3rd separate 3 'penal companies a  
 new = - . t 31st army ,7,9, 10, 1 1st separate penal companies 4 \_ and - | , 33rd Army ,3, 4th  
 separate penal companies 2 I - + -: 34th Army 1st separate penal company, 1 Separate penal company;--- -- - --. ----  
 Separate | 37th army \_penal company (with 392nd rifle division). 2 38th Army - Otiel penal company 1 | 39th Army -  
 Separate penal company] 1

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:N a e | Name of individual penal companies Total ! m -.- -- --& -- : 40th army 1st separate penal company th 1 illy - -  
 4 - 1 41st army: 1st separate army, 2, 3, 4th separate 4 penal companies - 1 and - O PO 142-. -I army [Separate penal  
 company 1 r 43rd army separate penal company 1 r Separate penal company; 1st separate 44th army penal company r  
 th (at the 417th sd); 1st separate 7th army, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th separate 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 15th separate penal companies 5. -- -  
 ---- -- --+ .- 47th Army ,1,2, 3rd separate penal companies | 3. 49th Army | , penal companies | 46th Army G,  
 1, 2-I separate penal companies 2 150th Army "Separate penal company 1 E + YDY - - | , Separate penal company  
 (with 91st SD); Separate penal company (with 302 -th sd); , r: 51st army 11th separate penal company (with 91st  
 sd); 6 '2nd separate penal company (with 302nd | | sd); 72nd, 73rd separate penal companies a and i and ii 52. th  
 army | 2nd separate penal company 1 | 53rd army 1,2, 3rd separate penal company 3 | a Oo ON Ol " | Separate penal  
 companies: | commanders - senior lieutenant Sazonov., Lieutenant Kislov, Senior Lieutenant Morozov, Senior Lieutenant  
 Tonkikh, | , lieutenant Chichivanov, senior lieutenant of the 154th Army r 17 Yavrov, senior lieutenant Volkov, r , r  
 , senior lieutenant Zhila, lieutenant | Ponukhalin; Separate penal company; 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th, 21st, 22nd  
 separate | r penal companies - - - - tt! 56th Army E-I Separate Penal Company 1 '57th Army Ye 1st Separate Penal  
 Company 1

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n |

armies e Names of individual penal companies | Total |

| 1



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1 59th Army Separate - penal company; 25th separate 2

penal company |

60th Army 1st, 2nd, 3rd separate penal companies at 3 | 61st Army Separate penal company 1

Separate penal companies

63rd Army at 1, 153, 203rd Rifle Division 3 64th Army 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th separate penal companies. 5 [65th Army 1, 2nd Separate Penal Companies 2

The work "Russia and the USSR in the Wars of the 20th Century: A Statistical Study" states: "Penal units of the Red Army existed legally from September 1942 to May 1945"! It is not clear what this conclusion is based on. Speaking in legal terms, penal formations have existed since July 28, 1942, when Order No. 227 was issued. They could not end their existence in May 1945. For example, the 128th separate penal company of the 5th Army participated in Harbin- Girinskaya offensive operation, which was carried out from August 9 to September 2, 1945. The company was disbanded on the basis of the directive of the headquarters of the 5th Army No. 0238 of October 28, 1945?.

There are different points of view in assessing how penal formations were used during the war years, including the question of whether there were barrage detachments behind the penal battalions and companies. For example, S.I. Honey noted: "Many times

1 Cited. Quoted from: Russia and the USSR in the wars of the twentieth century: A statistical study. S. 441.

2 See: Moroz A. Penal company // Red Star. 2007. April 11.

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I heard that penal companies and battalions went into battle because they were followed by detachments. It's a lie".

P.D. Barabolya: "And here's what's curious: during the almost six months of commanding the penitentiaries, I don't remember a case when someone deserted from the company, fled from the front line. They may object: they say, try to escape if there are detachments in the rear. But, firstly, I don't remember a case where I happened to see the notorious barrier somewhere. And secondly, I am firmly convinced that after all, the actions of these people who found themselves at the front were driven by the feeling of their involvement in the holy cause of defending the Motherland. Having once stumbled, they tried with all their behavior to wash off the "dark spot" from themselves, albeit at the cost of their own blood, and often life"?

M.I. Suknev: <... Academician Arbatov claims that we were guarded from behind by detachments. Not true! We didn't have them. We had enough of this Smersh, who saw everything. Your neck will be twisted right away... Usually, if the Germans were advancing, they surrounded us, where will you place a detachment?"3

A.I. Bernstein: "They (penalty boxers. - Comp.) were sent in groups, platoons, squads to the most risky areas, through minefields, etc. Behind them was a machine-gun cover, an NKVD unit - not so much against the Germans as against.

1 Cited. Quoted from: Lysova T. The road to half a century of anxiety and love // Respublka. No. 148 (3588). 2004. 7 August.

2 Quot. Quoted from: Living memory. Great Patriotic War: the truth about the war. In Zt. T. 1. - M., 1995. S. 360.

3 Cit. Quoted from: Suknev M.I. Notes of the commander of the penal battalion. Memoirs of a battalion commander. 1941]-1945. - M.: ZAO Tsentrpoligraf, 2007. P. 163.

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penalty box if they start retreating or crawling back. They warned: "Back from the battle, if you are wounded, do not crawl. You will be shot, we do not know why you are crawling back. Wait. They will pick you up later!

In order to understand what tasks the penal formations solved, we will use the memoirs of the participants in the war and publications on this topic.

N.G. Gudoshnikov: "Let idle battle-players from the pen do not attach great or even exclusive importance to penal divisions. Due to their small number and weak firepower, they were used in local sectors of the front, ensuring success for regiments, divisions, which were under operational subordination ... Most often they went into battle alone. Penalty guards usually either attacked, counterattacked, or stormed, broke through the defenses, carried out reconnaissance in force, took the "language" in battle, etc. - in a word, they made daring raids on the enemy, which successfully put pressure on his psyche "?.

A.V. Belyaev: "Our penal battalion was stationed near the front headquarters, at the commander's hand, so that, as they say, in case of emergency... Penal battalions were used in battles, as a rule, as part of divisions and regiments on the most fortified areas of the German defense. They also carried out independent tasks: they occupied the dominating heights to improve the positions of the defense, counterattacked the enemy that had penetrated our defenses, conducted reconnaissance in force and broke through the enemy defenses. Batal

1 Cited. Quoted from: Rubtsov Yu.V. Penal boxes of the Great Patriotic War. In life and on the screen / Yu.V. Rubtsov. — M.: Veche, 2007. S. 232.

2 Quot. Quoted from: Rubtsov Yu.V. To whom to serve a term to the order, but to whom - to the "tower" // Independent military review. 2006. April 28.

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it was rarely used in its entirety. And I think not because it was not necessary. The thing is that it took a lot of time to complete the formation, which was not included in the deadline for the penalty box. Therefore, as soon as a company was formed, they immediately brought it into battle.

M.G. Klyuchko: "The main task was one: to provide a path to the offensive of a specific unit. And the methods of its implementation were different: from reconnaissance in force to the capture of one or another height or a specific line of defense of the enemy. It was necessary to pave the way in the minefields. In general, we can say this: the command stuffed all the holes with penalty boxes, they were called upon to correct the mistakes of the authorities, who sent thousands of fighters to certain death in order to find the enemy's firepower, because the life of the convicts was worth nothing. So they drove one penal company after another into the inferno ... "?

And now, relying on the memories of the participants in the war and documents, let's see how the penal formations acted in the offensive.

M.G. Klyuchko: Were the Germans afraid of the penalty box? You probably know, yes. After all, an attack by a penal unit is a psychological attack on people knowingly sentenced to death. They couldn't retreat, they could only move forward. Imagine people who run chain after chain at you and yell at you with a good obscenity"3.

1 Cited. Quoted from: Rubtsov Yu.V. To whom to serve a term to the order, but to whom - to the "tower" // Independent military review. 2006. April 28.

2 Quot. Quoted from: Savchin D. Penal boxes did not shout "Hurrah!" // Mirror of the week. No. 20 (293). 2000. 20-26 May.

3 Cit. Quoted from: Rubtsov Yu.V. Penal boxes of the Great Patriotic War. In life and on the screen / Yu.V. Rubtsov. S. 156.

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E.A. Holbreich is of a different opinion: "All these stories that the Germans were shaking their hamstrings at the sight of an attacking penal company have no basis. The Germans did not care deeply who was attacking them. Psychologically, it was probably hard for the Germans to fight against penal officers.

`s battalions, the desire of the penal battalion members to atone for their "sins" before the Motherland with blood is too great. But the Germans fought intelligently, skillfully and bravely, no matter how hard it is to admit!

N.I. Smirnov: "We had nothing to lose, so we fought desperately like hell. They went on the attack on the first command, and there was no such thing as dribbling, moving back without an order. Once we didn't get up, but then a machine gun hit us so hard that you couldn't raise your head. The self-propelled gun shied away at this target, and we, having thundered "cheers", went on the offensive again ... Who yelled "For the Motherland!"

Here are some examples of the conduct of hostilities by penal units. On October 9, the commander of the 15th Guards Rifle Division (57th Army), who had at his disposal the 1st separate penal company, ordered it, after artillery preparation, to go on the offensive, shoot down the enemy's combat guard posts and hold the captured positions until the main troops approached. forces. The company completed the combat mission, losing three people: platoon commander Lieutenant N. Kharin, squad leader Sergeant V.S. Fedyakin, Red Army soldier Ya.T. Tanochka. November 1, 1942 from the 1st separate penal company of the 57th

1 Rubtsov Yu.V. Penal boxes of the Great Patriotic War. In life and on the screen / Yu.V. Rubtsov. S. 156.

2 Quot. Quoted from: Kuleshov V. Shtrafbatya // Altaiskaya Pravda. 2004. 17 September.

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Missions were sent to ordinary units 7 penalists who had completely served the term prescribed by order in the company.

A separate penal company of the 51st Army participated on September 1, 1942 in an offensive battle and retreated to its original positions only on orders. The soldiers and commanding staff of the company carried the wounded for 60 km. By order of the Military Council of the 51st Army, the title of the penal was removed from the company ?.

P.D. Barabolya in his memoirs describes the fighting for the village of Peschanka and height 130.6, which the enemy had well strengthened in advance in terms of engineering. An attempt to capture Peschanka and height on the move, without careful preparation and fire support, was not successful. A new attack was launched on January 22, 1943. "After reliable artillery preparation, we captured Peschanka by storm," recalls Barabolya, "and then at a height of 130.6 ... Many Germans were captured, we took a lot and trophy weapons. However, they themselves suffered hard: only 22 people remained in my platoon. That's more than fifty!"<sup>3</sup>.

Another battle of the penalized is evidenced by an entry dated January 10 in the diary of the 76th separate penal battalion of the Southern Front: cannons, with the support of the 3rd division of the 76th gap - to break through the enemy defenses and capture the northwestern slopes

1 For more details, see: Moroz A. Penal company // Krasnaya Zvezda. 2007. April 11.

2 See: Kuznetsov A. Penalty // Duel. 2005. No. 3.

3 Cit. By; Living memory. Great Patriotic War: the truth about the war. In Zt. T. 1. S. 362-363.

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mi height 111.6. It was the most difficult, important and responsible section of the front. Before the subdivision of Smerch (call sign of the battalion commander. - Comp.) just the task was set - on the first day of the battle to master this height.

Hundreds of machine-gun nests and artillery mortar batteries were firmly walled up in the ground and seemed impregnable. Snipers shot the target from the first shot. Every meter of ground was shot. Prior to this offensive, our guard units attacked this height 16 times and all 16 times from the destructive fire of the enemy rolled back.

The attack was thought out to the smallest detail. After half an hour of heavy artillery fire, there was a pause. The infantry from the trenches put forward prepared effigies and, for a greater effect of simulating an attack, a friendly "cheers" thundered. The goal has been reached. From the surviving points, the Germans opened furious fire. At that time, the observers spotted the firing points and, on a signal, opened the aiming fire...

Unexpectedly, in our area, the tanks also went on the attack. The soldiers of the Smerch unit were forced to get up and follow the tanks, although the time for the attack had not yet come. Otherwise, having endured time, they would risk being left without tank cover. The gunners, seeing that the tanks with infantry were already halfway to the front line of the enemy, ceased fire, afraid to cover their infantry and tanks with fire.

No one could have thought that dozens of enemy firing points had not been suppressed. One more decisive thrust and the infantry would break into the German defenses. The issue would be resolved. Suddenly one tank shuddered. A strong explosion of an anti-tank mine tore the tracks. Behind him - the second, third, fifth tank. All approaches to the front line were again

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mined. Seeing the frozen cars, the Germans opened dense flanking and frontal fire. The soldiers lay down, having suffered losses.

Destroying rifle and machine-gun fire of the enemy did not give any opportunity to raise his head. The dominating position of firing points and the terrain, convenient for shelling, put our fighters, deprived of tank cover, in a rather difficult position. Every minute was very expensive ... But to retreat to the starting line in the current situation would mean ruining the whole situation ...

And the only correct way out that Smerch took was to act independently, break into the front line of the enemy's defense with the forces of his unit and finish the job with a bayonet strike. The throw was bold and swift. Not a single fighter was left behind. With renewed vigor, a leaden shower of bullets lashed out. The ranks of the attackers are thinning out. But the German bunkers are getting closer. And nothing in

forces to hold back the fighters overflowing with courage. The first grenades have already been thrown. Deafening explosion. New leap forward. Enemy fire intensifies. Moving forward seems unthinkable. Each step is worth dozens of lives. The Germans transferred all their firepower to our sector. A hand-to-hand fight ensued. At that moment, the enemy's fire reached its highest point of tension. It is impossible to move. They lay down again. Artillery is still firing at the depth of the enemy. Height 111.6 lived with dozens of firing points. It can be assumed that due to the circumstances (premature attack by infantry and tanks), despite their firepower, the artillerymen did not succeed in suppressing a significant part of the enemy's machine-gun nests, which predetermined the outcome of the offensive battle on January 10.

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The whole day was a fierce battle. The enemy repelled the previous 16 attacks. Not knowing defeat, Tornado attacked the height all day. With his skill, will and iron stamina, he slowly but stubbornly broke the enemy's strongest knot of resistance.

And here is what they say about the combat operations of the penal units of N.G. Gudoshnikov and A.V. Poltsyn.

N.G. Gudoshnikov: "The Germans, advancing towards the Oboyan station, on July 8 (1943 - Comp.) occupied the village of Berezovka. Our penal company was ordered to take it back by storm right from the march. It was towards evening, we approached through the copses and shouting "Hurrah", with terrible shooting, rushed to the village, burst into it. And there was a real crowd of troops and equipment, especially tanks. Everything began to move, a heated battle ensued, and we had to retreat. They did not take the village, but they gave the enemy a good warning. The next day we defended against this armada with the support of artillery and mortars. Three dozen attack aircraft bombed us, mixed the company with the ground, but the penalty box held out until our tanks approached"<sup>2</sup>.

A.V. Pylytsyn noted that by July 1943 (by the beginning of the Battle of Kursk) the 8th separate penal battalion took up defensive positions in the area of Ponyri, Maloarkhangel'skoye in the sector of the 7th Lithuanian Rifle Division, where it received its first baptism of fire. In stubborn battles, the penal battalion first defended its positions, then broke through the enemy defenses and went on the offensive.

! Cit. By: Kuzmichev I.V. Penal boxes // Sergeant. 2000. No. 1 (14). S. 27, 33-34.

<sup>2</sup> Quot. Quoted from: Rubtsov Yu.V. To whom to serve a term to the order, but to whom - to the "tower" // Independent military review. 2006. April 28.

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lenie on Trosna. Subsequently, the battalion took part in hostilities on the soil of Ukraine, reaching the Dnieper in the Chernigov region. And only there he was first brought to rest and re-formation in the area of the village of Dobryanka. Having received reinforcements, the battalion was transferred to the Loevsky bridgehead area on the river. Sozh for its expansion and deepening. Having successfully coped with this task, as a result of which the city of Loev was liberated, the penal battalion went on the offensive and reached the city of Rechitsa.

The article by S. Glezerov "Penal companies and battalions in the battle for Leningrad" tells about the participation of penitentiaries in the battles for the Sinyavin Heights. September 28, 1943 two regiments (163rd and 320th) of the 11th strel - A military division of the 67th Army (commanded by Lieutenant General M.P. Dukhanov) was tasked with building on the success of three penal companies to seize the highway to Sinyavino. The next day, the commander of the 160th separate penal company, attached to the 320th rifle regiment, was ordered to capture the first enemy trench. When nominating

companies to their original positions, the enemy discovered it and opened heavy fire. The company lost about 50% of its composition, but continued to advance, and after "undermining high-explosive flamethrowers, the penalists went on the attack." The enemy concentrated fire on the advancing penalists from all types of weapons, forcing the company to lie down first and then retreat to their original positions. On September 30, the remnants of the 160th separate penal company, together with rifle units of the 11th rifle division, tried to restore lost positions along the road.

1 See: Glezerov S. Penal companies and battalions in the battle for Leningrad // Vesti. 2006. | December.

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on Sinyavino. However, the enemy managed to repulse the attack again.

P.S. Amosov: "January 5, 1944, 8 hours 10 minutes. From our side, a tracer shell cut through the morning haze, then the Katyushas and all the artillery of the front spoke. At first, taken aback by surprise, the enemy began to answer. Penal boxes (we are talking about the 15th separate penal battalion. - Comp.) were 300 meters in front of the front line. They lay on the snow, there were no shoulder blades. I was number two in the light machine gun. Even before the attack, number one Nikolai Rychagov was wounded and crawled away to be dressed. I was left alone with the machine gun. When the turn came to the last disk, I, having thrown the belt over my shoulder, got up, and everyone silently went on the attack. They ran and fell, walked and flew up into the air. Even before the attack, a fragment hit me in the left shoulder, but I didn't go for the dressing - it's not easier from behind, everything was mixed up. Explosion... I was thrown to the ground. I woke up hearing "Hurrah!" those units that were behind us, and the rumble of late tanks.

V.G. Sorokin: "In May 1944, I arrived in the 38th Army and took over the battalion. We changed the cavalry regiment, very shabby. On the phone I received the task - to take the height. The next night he took the height, for which he received the Order of Alexander Nevsky from the army commander Moskalenko. I went with the battalion all over Poland, half of Germany and Czechoslovakia. There was a meeting with the Americans. I can firmly say: the penalty box was thrown into the most difficult sections"2.

1 Cited. Quoted from: Rubtsov Yu.V. Penal boxes of the Great Patriotic War. In life and on the screen / Yu.V. Rubtsov. pp. 156-157.

2 Quot. Quoted from: Rubtsov Yu.V. To whom to serve a term to the order, but to whom - to the "tower" // Independent military review. 2006. April 28.

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I.I. Korzhik: "We were given the task of cutting the roads connecting Narva with Tallinn and reaching the Gulf of Finland. Attack - at dawn. But there was not a single artillery or mortar shot. Even the heavy machine guns were silent. The first hundred meters had to be overcome in open areas. What a high price we paid for each of them! Only I have changed ten trays. With great difficulty we walked twelve kilometers in deep snow. There were only 100-200 meters left to the road, but the ammunition ran out. We were forced to stop, and then move two kilometers away. For two months we tried to overcome these kilometers again, attacking several times a day..."!

I.P. Gorin recalled how he participated in the attack on the fortified area of the enemy. The penitentiaries were armed only with rifles. They went on the attack without artillery preparation and carried it out without fire support. "In two hours, the company covered a distance "quite large, somewhere between a hundred and two hundred meters," Gorin noted. "Then the fire intensified to impossibility. The Germans defended the fortified area together with the Vlasovites, and it was impossible for them to surrender, and they fought to the last. In this fight, I.P. Gorin was wounded, thereby atoning for his guilt.

THEM. Bogatyrev: "The most difficult areas were given for the battle. And the penalty boxers are desperate people, they went on the attack together ... Shoulders by the belt, cuttings down, so the owl

1 Cited. Quoted from: Rubtsov Yu.V. To whom to serve a term to the order, but to whom - to the "tower" // Independent military review. 2006. April 28.

2 Quot. Quoted from: Babchenko A. Fraudster from the penal battalion // Novaya Gazeta. 2005. September 26.

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towed to cover the chest. And in full growth! They knew that they had to, and they went ... He will not run away, the penalty box. Rather, an ordinary soldier will run away. Either he will retreat, or he will surrender as a prisoner ... But the penalty box - no, they did not give up. They were deprived of their commandships, orders and everything else, but they were left in the party. Membership cards were with them. They fought to the point of bloodshed... The village of Redkino. And through the edge - the village of Voskresenskoye. He had to be occupied in the night battle. Our battalion, since the penalty, always goes first in the forehead. The rest are on the flanks. There were already 200-300 meters to Voskresensky. Lie down, waiting for the signal. Meanwhile, our tanks went along the edge of the forest. The German got up, hung up the "lanterns". We are at a glance. From a mortar at us. And that's it." A.V. Cherepkov, recalling the offensive of the penal company: on one of the villages in Poland, said that the enemy fired heavily, preventing the attackers from raising their heads. "I got up and shouted: whoever wants to live, follow me," Alexander Vasilyevich recalled. Not everyone got up. We moved forward in short bursts. We stormed the last houses and completed the combat mission. Later I learned that for that battle I was awarded the Order of the Red Banner. V.V. Karpov: "Our company, consisting of 198 people, was sent to the Kalinin Front, near the town of Bely. After the first battle, 9 fighters remained in it. The company only managed to run to the wire. But I wasn't even hurt. In the next battle, after the reorganization, we received some fire support. We burst into the trench, started hand-to-hand combat, captured positions

1 Cited. By; Swede E. Shtrafbat // Motherland. 1991. No. 6-7. S. 63.

2 Quot. Quoted from: Kruglikov A. He commanded a penal company, and then taught children to play chess // St. Petersburg Vedomosti. 2007. May 4.

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tion, the task was completed. After some time, we look - alone again. No attack from the right or left. Then one German tank came out against us and began to shoot point-blank. The result was the same as the first time.

In general, I. Tolstoy gives a general idea of the actions of the penalty box in his story "People in cuirasses". "After breaking through the German defenses, the battalion was withdrawn from the battle," he writes. "He still had a lot of dirty work left to do. Knowing the strike force of the shells, the command threw the battalion where it was necessary to "tear" or "darn" something. Heavy battles gave way to swift marches, marches again to battles. Soon the figures of fighters with gray-green shields on their chests were known to almost the entire army. Wherever they appeared, those around them showed them respectful respect. The armored men themselves had no time to figure out whether they were fighting well or badly... The prisoners told about the fear they experienced when they found out that "panzermenshen" were acting against them? Further, Tolstoy tells about how the "panzer men" acted: "<... As soon as they managed to jump out of the cars, a command was given, and the companies moved at a run to the heights. Of course, none of them then imagined how important this "height 208.3" called on the maps was for the command. No one thought that for many of them it would be the last test ... The battalion restored the situation with a decisive counterattack, but suffered considerable losses ... "3.

1! Cit. Quoted from: Gavrilenko A. Staying alive // Military-industrial courier. No. 17 (183). 2007. May 9-15.

2 Quot. by: Penal boxes: Collection. — M.: Patriot, 1990. S. 414. 3 Ibid. S. 417.

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In the book of M.G. Oreshet "Orphaned Shores" tells about the assault on the Musta-Tunturi Ridge on the Kola Peninsula. The ridge is granite mountains with steep ledges rising near Volokova Bay to a height of 262 m from the water level and then descending to a height of 93 m. They end approximately in the middle of the isthmus between the Sredny Peninsula and the mainland. The enemy created a heavily fortified defense here in advance, using advanced construction technology. Headquarters, barracks, infirmaries were hidden in catacombs specially dug into the rocks. "Based on the presence of fortifications, firepower and the forces stationed there, it was impossible to take Musta Tunturi in an attack," noted Artillery Lieutenant General Yakov Dmitrievich Skrobov. "Planning the offensive, we threw a penal battalion into the breach, and the main forces went on the attack in secondary sectors in order to reach the rear of the enemy. But this plan could be carried out only by shedding a lot of blood. What helped? Definitely - the offensive of our troops from Murmansk. The Germans began to hastily retreat, saving their own skins, and only strong cover groups were left on the ridge. And the penalty kicks helped the attackers a lot."

The commander of the 614th separate penal company N.I. Ryabtsovsky, who took part in the assault on the Musta-Tunturi ridge, recalled: "On the eve of the attack, we went to Musta-Tunturi, and suddenly we felt like such insects in front of this hulk. I didn't even think about the Germans - it was scary from the mere thought that we had to go along such steep slopes. We hit, then, along the gorge. We run with full gear, the spirit locks, the legs are wadded, the heart is in the throat. They crossed over a hundred meters when the Nazis began to treat me with grenades. At the same time, they hit a minefield. Here and

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I don't have the strength, we've run out, but where can you go in a narrow stone bag? The guys fell like rye spikelets. We storm further. Ahead is a rock, and behind it is a gentle climb of a hundred meters along a completely bald stone. How the enemy shot us there! With gusto. The bodies rolled down, and the team: "Forward! Forward!" There were 750 of us before the attack. I cannot say how many soldiers reached the German defense line. The dead were hastily covered with pebbles and immediately let's write stupid reports about who and how showed themselves in the bloody attack. So I think: was she needed?

E.A. Holbreich: "Neither we nor the Germans attacked in droves, as in the movies. The losses would have been too great. A rather rare chain moves, where it is running, and where it is crawling. When attacking, you try to keep your comrade with your peripheral vision.

A.V. Magpie: "The hills are all around. We are below, and the Germans are above. They fired every night. We went to the "sally". Let's go, shoot, I'm an athlete - ahead of everyone. Then back. And in the morning they awarded me the medal "For Courage". The next morning - again "Forward!". The Germans pushed us closer and began to pour mortars on us. Heads, arms, legs, pieces of bodies were flying around..."<sup>2</sup>

And here is how V.L. Kondratiev in the story "Meetings on Sretenka" the attack of the penalty boxers on one of the villages: "The field was in a gray predawn haze ... German rockets took off into the sky less and less, already powerless to break through the pre-dawn fog with their light. The battalion crawled, crawled quickly; skillfully burying behind the corpses, and Volodya thought that meters

1 Cited. by: There was no one to replace them. Memoirs of a front-line soldier Yefim Abelevich Golbreich // Krymskaya Pravda. 2006. August 23.



2 Quot. Quoted from: Vishnevskaya S. Started the war in a penal company, and ended up as a real artist... // Mgt. 2007. 9 July.

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two hundred, if not more, they advanced. The village was outlined more and more clearly by the sharp roofs of the huts... Soon, soon it will be necessary to rise to the attack... Genka was crawling beside him, on the other side Vadim, the lieutenant colonel lagged behind - age.

- Well, then, in the last, decisive? whispered Genka, smiling wryly.

And immediately after his words, a tracer machine gun fired from the left flank of the German positions. Red threads swept over people - they had to rise. Without any command, as one, they got up from the ground and ran ... At first they ran in silence, then someone cursed, and others followed him ...

The Germans increased their fire. The entire German front line was lit up with the lights of shots, but the roar of obscene screams, thickly hanging over the field and blocking, overpowering the machine-gun delirium, made it clear to the Germans which unit was rushing at them, and the fire began to fade, and the mines, flying over, were torn already behind battalion. Volodka saw how the Germans began to leave their positions - screaming, with torn mouths and bloodshot eyes, the penalists were approaching their trenches.

Volodka fled, out of breath from a fast, non-stop run, but for some reason internally very calm, almost sure that he would not be killed today ... Having jumped into a German trench, he stumbled upon a healthy Fritz, who rushed towards him with rifle aimed with a bayonet in the stomach. That's when, for the first time in the entire war, fencing with bayonets came in handy for Volodya, which he enthusiastically practiced in the Far Eastern regiment, he knocked down the German rifle, and her bayonet only slightly slid over his leg. With a blow of the butt on the temple, he knocked him down, and then fired at point-blank range. Of everything  
this

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only one thing remained in his memory - a neat patch on the German's trousers, which he saw when his overcoat opened. Having jumped out of the trench, he ran further, catching up with others who were already throwing grenades at the huts of the village ... .

The Germans ran out half-dressed, fired back, but the penalty boxers could not be stopped - twenty minutes later the village, for which so many lives had been laid, was taken!

Several dozen people in the heat of battle rushed to pursue the Germans outside the village, but they were stopped. The easel machine gun, which arrived in time by that time, shot those running in the back until they ran to a small wood and disappeared in it ... It was all over. There was a victory!

Penal units and subunits fought staunchly and bravely in defensive battles as well. Colonel of Justice A. Kuznetsov gives a description of the battle of one of the penal companies of the 51st Army attached to the 91st Rifle Division. At the end of August 1942, in a defensive battle, this company repelled an enemy attack supported by ten tanks. On August 29, being cut off from its troops, the company with battles left the encirclement.

During the Battle of Kursk on July 12, 1943 at three o'clock in the afternoon, writes G.A. Oleinikov, "up to a battalion of grenadiers and a company of machine gunners of the 680th SS motorized regiment, with the support of 18 tanks, including several Tigers, attacked units of the 290th Guards Rifle Regiment in

direction of the Veseliy farm. During the almost two-hour battle, the enemy managed to take the 1st and 3rd rifle battalions and the 108th

1 See: Kuznetsov A. Penalty // Duel. 2005. No. 3. 99

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penalty squad. But, having lost six tanks, one of them T-UJ, they retreated to the forest northwest of the Klyuchi farm!

Penal formations were also used to conduct combat operations as a forward detachment. This, in particular, is mentioned in the memoirs of A.V. Poltsyn. During the preparation for the Rogachev-Zhlobin operation (February 21-26, 1944), the 8th separate penal battalion on the night of February 18, 1944 was alerted and advanced to the front line. The battalion, reinforced by a group of sappers and a platoon of flamethrowers, was included in the 3rd Army, Lieutenant General A.V. Gorbatov. On the night of February 19, 1944, he was entrusted with the task of crossing the front line unnoticed by the enemy and, avoiding combat contact with him, go to his rear with a bold throw, reach the western outskirts of Rogachev and, in cooperation with the ski battalion, capture the city and hold it until the approach of the main forces of the 3rd Army. In case of failure to capture Rogachev or the cancellation of this mission, the battalion had to operate in the tactical depth of the enemy (up to 20 km), disrupt enemy communications, communications, blow up bridges, smash headquarters.

The battalion managed to go unnoticed by the enemy to the first trench of his defense and capture it. After that, his units opened fire on the enemy, captured the village of Madora, and by dawn on February 20 approached Rogachev from the northwest, cutting the fork in the highway to Bobruisk and Zhlobin. Along the way

1 For more details, see: Oleinikov G.A. Battle of Prokhorovka (July 1943). What really happened near Prokhorovka (military-historical essay). - St. Petersburg: Nestor, 1998.

2 Pylytsyn A.V. Free kick, or How an officer's penal battalion reached Berlin. S. 32.

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Battalion personnel destroyed enemy equipment, set fire to food and ammunition depots, destroyed suitable reserves and cut communication lines. After that, the battalion connected with units of the 3rd Army that went on the offensive.

Penal units and subunits took part in forcing water barriers, capturing and holding plandarmes.

N. Kolbasov's story "Penalty Boxes" tells in detail about the actions of Major Terekhin's combined penal battalion during the battle for Leningrad. Let us use this story and introduce the reader to the task that the battalion had to solve. "The planned capture of the bridgehead in the area of Moskovskaya Dubrovka has a dual purpose," said Major Orlov, deputy chief of staff of the division. "The first is to divert some of the enemy forces that oppose our strike force in the Ivanovsky area, break through the enemy's defenses here and go to Sinyavino in order to link up with the troops of the Volkhov Front ... The second goal is to disrupt the decisive As they say, the storming of Leningrad... Your companies will have to cross the Neva and seize a bridgehead on its left bank, right here, - the major pointed with the end of the pointer at a black square on the opposite bank of the Neva. "There used to be a small fishing and dacha settlement here, Moskovskaya Dubrovka... The command of the division believes that your consolidated battalion will not lose the glory of the heroic defenders of the Nevsky Piglet!"

On the night of September 26, 1942, three penal companies under the command of Major Terekhin occupied Exodus

1 Cited. by: Penal boxes: Collection. - M.: Patriot, 1990. S. 131-133. 101

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frontier along the right bank of the Neva. At dawn they crossed the river. "Together with the sappers, the penitentiaries overcame the coastal steep in one breath, flew with a roar onto the upper terrace and ... did not meet any resistance," writes Kolbasov. There were no Germans in the first trench. Only here and there lay half-covered with earth, mangled, burnt corpses. Behind the trench stretched a line of minefields pitted with craters, but the heated platoon rushed at it on the move, without waiting for the sappers... deciding to take him to this shore. Stretching out in a chain, the penalty box fled, jumping over poles entangled with barbed wire and scraps of a wire spiral. A barrage of fire raged ahead... The landing in the area of Moskovskaya Dubrovka came as a complete surprise to the Hitlerite command... The enemy, taken by surprise, hurriedly brought in reinforcements from other sectors. The shelling of the Neva in the area of the crossing increased every minute. Vessels rushing to the bridgehead received holes, lost their course and control, sank... On the approaches to the second trench, the advance of the twenty-seventh company stalled. Here and there the surviving rifle cells and machine guns came to life. Pinned by fire to the ground, the penalty box twice rose to the attack and rushed forward. It was hard to figure out whether it was already morning or not. On the tormented piece of land, dotted with craters, it became brighter from the flashes of rockets, blinding jets of flamethrowers and multi-colored dotted lines of tracer bullets ... Kolobov's platoon advanced in the center of the company's orders. Having pulled ahead and found himself without flank support, he suffered tangible losses. When up to the trench

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there were no more than a hundred meters left, the squads lay down under dense machine-gun and automatic fire ... The advance stopped, and the companies suffered more and more tangible losses. The worst situation was on the right flank. The commander of the twenty-sixth company, Lepilin, was killed, the platoons were commanded by detached ones, and the enemy, regardless of losses, constantly counterattacked ... Out of the entire battalion, only Kolobov's platoon managed to break into the second trench with a desperate jerk and after a short brutal rush - shovel fight to master its small area. A few seconds later, after the remnants of the platoon caught on the trench, heavy fire from heavy machine guns cut them off tightly from the company lying somewhere behind ... By two o'clock in the afternoon, the twenty-seventh company had captured the last trench in the first position of the enemy defense. Farther on, about a hundred and twenty meters away, one could see the Leningrad-Shlisselburg highway, behind it a small field cut with a network of trenches and shooting cells and a sand pit with a narrow-gauge railway adjoining it. And in the distance stretched an autumn grove dressed in a golden-red outfit. The last attack cost the penal company dearly, but the Kolobovsky platoon that was the first to rise up lost only six soldiers!

In the novel by V.P. Astafiev's "Bridgehead" on the use of penal units during the crossing of the Dnieper in the fall of 1943, the following is said: baggy went to

1 Cited. by: Penal boxes: Collection. - M.: Patriot, 1990. S. 141-155. 103

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attack penal company. Without cries of "Hurrah", without prodding, spurring on oneself and one's closest comrade with only shrill swearing, at first it seemed to be harmonious, crowded, but gradually detaching from

everything in the world. Left alone with death, uttering to absolutely no one, and to the attacker himself, too, not being led, in the womb before himself, the scream was born, they shouted, poured out, not hearing themselves and not understanding where they were going, and what they were yelling, and how much they still had to go - up to the ends of this earth or to some other end, because everything in the world must come to an end, even God-damned, outcast people, it's not forever to go roaring into the fire. They stumbled, fell, wanted to and could not hide behind anything, curl up in a funnel that was invitingly open with a dark mouth. Enemy trenches were thrashed at the "Shuriks" in the opposite direction. As soon as they lingered, lay down, the machine guns of the detachment would spur them on from behind. Forward, only forward, to the muzzles of machine-gun fires, to the spitting mortars, forward, to hellfire, to hell—they have no place on earth itself—their avalanche, disastrous path is only there, over there, to the reddish brows of freshly dug trenches..."

G.G. Vysotsky: "In the interfluvium of the Vistula, Bug and Nareva, units of the 38th Infantry Division went to seize the bridgehead. On the move, the company entered the breakthrough of the first line of defense of the Germans. One fascist counterattack followed another. The earth shook from the explosions. From left and right, tanks and self-propelled guns fired, aircraft bombed, artillery thundered, submachine gunners scribbled and mortars thumped. Rare hours of calm gave way to more violent attacks of the enemy! The company held the bridgehead from which the Soviet troops crossed the Vistula along the

1 Cited. Quoted from: Gordienko A. Each of his orders is a memory of a company // East Siberian Truth. No. 24248. 2002. June 20.

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rule over Warsaw. And when the divisions of the 49th Army came to replace, Vysotsky's company withdrew from the battle. According to him, only four remained alive: a signaller, two more soldiers and he, the company commander. Lieutenant G.G. Vysotsky was then awarded the Order of Alexander Nevsky.

In the autumn of 1944, the 8th Separate Penal Battalion as part of the 65th Army fought for the expansion of the Narevsky bridgehead. In this case, the battalion suffered heavy losses. A.V. Pyltsyn, recalling this, noted: "After the war, the authors of some publications sought to show that the penal battalions were doomed to be suicide bombers in advance, that the penal battalions, like the army penal companies, were units doomed to death. Yes, for all the time that I happened to live in a penal battalion, this Narew period was almost the only one that could confirm these judgments. And the penalty boxers themselves had the right to think the same!

On January 14, 1945, the 123rd separate penal company of the 5th shock army of the 1st Belorussian Front under the command of 3.M. Bunyatova "was one of the first in the army to cross the river. Pilica (on the territory of Poland. - Comp.), captured the bridge and held it until reinforcements arrived in the area of the settlement of Palchev (9 km south-west of the city of Varka). The company destroyed over 100 and captured 45 enemy soldiers and officers, captured six-barreled mortars, 3 guns. February 27, 1945 3.M. Bunyatov was awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union.

#### Penalty units and divisions were used

1 Cited. Quoted from: Pyltsyn A.V. Free kick, or How an officer's penal battalion reached Berlin. pp. 146-147. 2 See: Golden Stars of Azerbaijan. - Baku, 1975. S. 66-67.

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also for reconnaissance. Most often they were used to capture the "tongue" and conduct reconnaissance in force.

I.I. Roshchin: "The penitentiaries were not allowed to go to reconnaissance. And our divisional intelligence could not manage to take the language. The sailors caught fire with this idea - ladies, we will attract it to you - and do not

one! For several days they studied the location of the enemy, the daily routine of the pedantic Germans... And then they simply "knocked out" them, attacked skillfully and very unexpectedly. Many were killed, and five - gagged - were taken to the location of the company. The prisoners were immediately taken away by scouts, the division received gratitude, and the penal company.... It is the penal one. Well, at least the sailors were soon released."

IN AND. Golubev: "They are calling for volunteers for reconnaissance in force ... Twenty people volunteered. Gone. Four returned. And the task was not completed. They are picking up again. And always in such cases they promise that if the task is completed, the fine will be removed. Let's! Leshka and I nevertheless decided to go. The task is to take combat guards. It was noon, twelve o'clock. The distance between the trenches is small, they did not wait for us at all. About thirty of us left. It worked out quickly and well. From rage, the men, to be honest, defeated the outposts. They managed to catch one, they brought it with them. But no one left the penalty area: we were removed from the front line, made liaison, someone was shoved somewhere, even sent to the economic platoon..."<sup>2</sup>

N.I. Smirnov: "Penalmen were given the task of taking "language". The sappers removed the mines, and after five

1 Cited. Quoted from: Nekrasova M. Redeem with blood // Guards of Russia. 2004. May. No. 6 (21).

2 Quot. Quoted from: Swede E. Shtrafbat // Motherland. 1991. No. 6-7. pp. 62, 63. 106

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minute artillery preparation, we went into battle. Fear, of course, I have suffered, but pulled myself together and led his attack. They burst into the trenches, let's beat the German, then they rounded up one corporal and, as planned, went back. When the Germans came to their senses a little, they began to "water" us from all sides, to surround us. I had to go through. Of the two hundred fighters, about forty people remained alive then, and then crippled and wounded. I was just lucky - I still think how it was possible to get out of such a massacre alive and unharmed!

From October 31 to December 11, 1943, the troops of the North Caucasian Front (from November 20 - Separate Primorskaya Army) under the command of Colonel General I.E. Petrov, with the assistance of the forces of the Black Sea Fleet and the Azov military flotilla, the Kerch-Eltigen landing operation was carried out in order to capture the eastern part of the Kerch Peninsula and create conditions for its complete liberation. Ten days before the start of the operation, reconnaissance in force was carried out, which ended in failure. On the night of October 21, the enemy managed to capture 20 Red Army prisoners in the area of Novo-Ivanovka. Here is what was noted according to their testimonies in the reconnaissance report of the headquarters of the 5th army corps of the enemy dated October 30, 1943: "... The interrogation of 20 prisoners captured there shows the following. On October 20, 1943, at 17:00, two speedboats left Anapa. One of them was armed: two anti-aircraft machine guns and two 45-mm cannons, as well as 25 Red Army soldiers of the 2nd company of the 3rd penal battalion. On the second, smaller boat, there were three anti-aircraft machine guns and one 45-mm cannon, as well as 12 people from the 11th reconnaissance company. On both

1 Cited. Quoted from: Kuleshov V. Shtrafbatya // Altaiskaya Pravda. 2004. 17 September.

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boats were senior lieutenants. The general leadership was carried out by a senior lieutenant. The soldiers were armed with machine guns and submachine guns... The mission of the landing force was to reconnoiter the shore and positions, capture prisoners, and destroy artillery positions. In the event that the task was completed, all the penalized were promised to remove their criminal record ... Under the cover of fire, the boats approached the shore at 100 m, and from there the soldiers had to walk on the water. Ahead were the penalty box to remove the mines. At this time, two German machine guns opened fire on them from the shore. One of the lieutenants threw combat groups against these machine guns. The enemy managed to create a bridgehead 600 m wide and up to

300 m south of Novo-Ivanovka. Both German machine guns were moved to the pillbox, which was located 300 meters from the shore. Our artillery was located on Mount Durmen, but the fire of three batteries was still ineffective. During the firefight between the coastal guards and the landing team, which lasted almost all night, most of the penalty boxers used the darkness to hide. The boats waited for the soldiers almost until morning, and then, taking advantage of the darkness, they withdrew. Until 10/23/43, 14 penalty boxes and six scouts were captured. One soldier resisted stubbornly and was killed. It turns out that 2/3 of the paratroopers did not return to their own. The prisoners claim that the landing of sea and air assault forces on the Kerch Peninsula is expected!

The actions of the penal battalion at the end of December 1943 in the area of the 14th Rifle Corps of the 59th Army of the Volkhov Front can be found in the memoirs of M.I. Suknev. He writes: "Six scouts with commander Krestyaninov in camouflage

1 Cited. by: Litvin G.A., Smirnov E.I. Liberation of the Crimea (November 1943 - May 1944). - M.: Agency "Krechet", 1994. S. 29.

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with sleds, sometimes in a plastunsky style, sometimes skidding, sometimes bending over, running, they passed the ice of the Volkhov and managed to lie down around the trench - a machine-gun ambush of the Germans. The darkness deepened. On the other side, silence. The Germans hung up several rockets. And suddenly we hear the muffled explosion of the F-1 grenade. A few minutes later, scouts appeared, carrying a German non-commissioned officer, slightly wounded in the thigh!

A.V. Pyltsyn gives an example of the successful actions of the 8th separate penal battalion. During preparations for Operation Bagration in the summer of 1944, the reconnaissance company of the 38th Infantry Division failed to capture the language. Therefore, the division commander, General M.G. Solovyov assigned this task to the 8th separate penal battalion. "According to the plan of the battalion commander (A.A. Osipov. — Comp.), our 1st company and units of the PTR company (anti-tank rifle. — Comp.), which was then commanded by Captain Vasily Tsigichko," writes Pyltsyn, - in the area where my platoon was defending, they were supposed to create a noise "appearance" (if you can define it that way) of building a bridge or crossing a river ... For this purpose, several logs were dragged ashore ... and small sappers - They began to knock on them with nimble shoulder blades, simulating either hewing logs, or knocking them together. And on the opposite bank in the coastal bushes, directly opposite this place, they organized a powerful ambush, well camouflaged.

There was no "catch" on the first night. But on the second, which was bright, our observers noticed a group of Germans crawling their way through the swampy

1 Cited. Quoted from: Suknev M.I. Notes of the commander of the penal battalion. Memoirs of a battalion commander. 1941-1945. - M.: ZAO Tsentrpoligraf, 2007. S. 160-161.

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shore to the construction site. Quietly, without noise, our ambush covered them. They stabbed with bayonet-knives from the "SVT" (self-loading Tokarev rifles) the Nazis, who resisted and tried to signal their own. And three of them, bound and gagged, were taken to this shore, and then, after a cursory interrogation, which was conducted by my clerk-translator Vinogradov, they were sent further - to the headquarters of the battalion. Three languages at once, and one of them is an officer! And he went to 8 penalty boxers who participated in the ambush, material for full early rehabilitation (and also without "redemption by blood") and for awarding, if not orders, but only medals!

In May-June 1944, a group of penitentiaries (141 men) of the 9th separate penal battalion of the 1st Ukrainian Front, under the command of the commander of the guards battalion, Lieutenant Colonel Lysenko, acted in the interests of the 410th Rifle Regiment 81 th Infantry Division of the 3rd Guards Army. The group conducted four night searches, captured two "tongues", destroyed two enemy groups totaling 140 people, losing 22 killed and 34 wounded<sup>2</sup>.

In July 1944, one of the companies (27 people) of the 9th separate penal battalion under the command of the guard captain I.A. Poluektova supported the actions of the 168th Infantry Regiment of the 24th Samara-Ulyanovsk Iron Rifle Division. In the combat characteristics, approved by the division commander, Major General F.A. Prokhorov noted: "Having received a combat order for force reconnaissance in force, on the night of July 7, 1944,

1 Cited. Quoted from: Pylytsyn A.V. Free kick, or How an officer's penal battalion reached Berlin. S. 73.

2 See: Rubtsov Yu.V. Penal boxes of the Great Patriotic War. In life and on the screen / Yu.V. Rubtsov. S. 178.

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advancing to the starting line, the company began to operate in combat with the support of machine-gun artillery fire with the task of advancing 400-600 meters. They occupied an advantageous line in battle and, by order of the command, entrenched themselves. As a result, up to an enemy infantry platoon, a bunker were destroyed, two enemy light machine guns were destroyed by fire and grenades. The officers and rank and file acted courageously, showing courage!"

In a brief summary of the generalized combat experience of the operational department of the headquarters of the 8th Guards Army on the hostilities in the Berlin operation of May 10, 1945, it was noted: "Two days before the start of the Berlin operation in order to clarify the fire system, the nature of - the crown and the true outline of the front edge of the main line of defense of the enemy, reconnaissance in force was carried out by the forces of two rifle battalions and two penal companies in various sections of the breakthrough.

Each rifle battalion was reinforced with a SU-76 battery, a SU-152 battery, a company of sappers and was supported by one mortar regiment, the artillery regiment of the division, from which they acted (without howitzer batteries), all mortars of the division, 76 and 45-mm guns, which were on direct fire at the line of attack of the battalions, and one divisional volley of RS.

The penal companies operating on the flanks were reinforced (each) with a SU-76 battery, a platoon of sappers and supported by one mortar regiment, the artillery regiment of the division, on the site of which they operated (without howitzer batteries), all mortars of the division, 45 and 76- mm guns, standing on direct fire, and a divisional volley of RS ...

1 Cited. Quoted from: Rubtsov Yu.V. Penal boxes of the Great Patriotic War. In life and on the screen / Yu.V. Rubtsov. S. 178.

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The attack was preceded by a 10-minute fire raid, and at the beginning of the fire raid, one divisional volley of RS, M-3 (per battalion, penal company) was fired, and the attack was escorted by a single fire shaft of 82-mm mortars, during the attack army artillery subgroups fought against active enemy batteries ...

As a result of well-planned, prepared and conducted reconnaissance, the task was completed, which contributed to the identification of the enemy defense system, and the capture of the first

trench lines and strongholds on the front line were improved starting positions for the upcoming breakthrough.

The above examples refute the opinion of S. Glezerov, who states: "Only auxiliary tasks were assigned to penal units, while they could not conduct reconnaissance and sabotage activities behind enemy lines. Firstly, they did not have enough experience, secondly, they were simply not trusted, and thirdly, and most importantly, they were not intended for this ..."?

In the course of the previous story, it was already noted that penal units and subdivisions suffered significant losses in the performance of combat missions. To illustrate, let us cite examples from published literature and memoirs of war veterans.

At the beginning of January 1943, the 57th Army, as part of the shock group of the Don Front (commander General

1 Russian archive: Great Patriotic War: Battle for Berlin (Red Army in defeated Germany): Vol. 15 (4-5). - M.: TERRA, 1995. S. 463-464.

2 Quot. Quoted from: Glezerov S. Penal companies and battalions in the battle for Leningrad // Vesti. 2006. December 1st.

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lieutenant, since January 15, Colonel General K.K. Rokossovsky) participated in the encirclement, blocking and defeat of enemy troops near Stalingrad. The 60th (former 1st) and 61st (former 2nd) separate penal companies operated within the army. During the assault attacks, the commanders of platoons of the 60th separate penal company, Lieutenant A.N. Shipunov, P.A. Zhuk, A.G. Bezuglovich. On the same day, 122 penalty boxers were killed and injured. Particularly heavy battles were waged from January 23 to 30, when the loss of the company amounted to 139 people wounded and killed.

Since August 28, 1943, the 60th separate penal company under the command of Senior Lieutenant D. Belim, as part of the 68th Army, participated in the Yelninsko-Dorogo-Buzhskaya offensive operation. In just one day, September 7, the 60th separate penal company, advancing near the villages of Suglitsa and Yushkovo, lost 42 people killed (including company commander D. Belim) and wounded.

S. Glezerov gives the following data on the losses of the 160th and 267th separate penal companies of the 67th Army. On October 5, 1943, they launched an offensive without prior artillery preparation. The offensive was not successful, and both companies lost 131 people killed and wounded?

At the beginning of 1944, the 5th Army, commanded by Lieutenant General N.I. Krylov, as part of the Western Front, fought offensive battles on Bogushevsky

1 See: Moroz A. Penal company // Red Star. 2007. April 11. 2Ibid.

3 See: Glezerov S. Penal companies and battalions in the battle for Leningrad // Vesti. 2006. | December.

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direction. The 128th (former 60th) separate penal company under the command of senior lieutenant A. Korolev also participated in the hostilities. The fierceness of these battles is evidenced by the fact that only in the battles on January 10 and from February 4 to 10, the 128th separate penal company lost 89 people killed and 288 wounded!



A. Babchenko in the article "Swindler from the penal battalion" notes that one of the penal companies consisted of 142 people. Almost all of them died on February 22, 1944. "In the column "reason for liberation", the commander of the penal company, lieutenant (it can be seen from the diligent student handwriting that he is still quite a boy), opposite the first name he wrote "Killed in battle. He atoned for the guilt with blood," notes Babchenko. — In order not to repeat himself, he put a dash in front of the rest of the names. On February 22, the 44th, only a few fighters of one hundred and forty some penal company survived. Man thirty. They all died two days later. In the next attack"2.

A.V. Belyaev: "The losses, as far as I remember, were great. Approximately 50 - 70 percent?

N.G. Gudoshnikov: "Our company was enough for one or two, rarely three serious battles. Practically no one stayed in the ranks for more than a month during offensive battles.

1 See: Moroz A. Penal company // Red Star. 2007. April 11.

2 Quot. Quoted from: Babchenko A. Fraudster from the penal battalion // Novaya Gazeta. 2005. September 26.

3 Cit. Quoted from: Rubtsov Yu.V. To whom to serve a term to the order, to whom - to the "tower" // Independent military review. 2006. April 28.

4 Ibid.

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E.P. Bazdyrev noted that after the battle on June 22, 1944, he informed the battalion commander that out of 225 people, 51 people were killed and died from wounds, 63 were wounded!

N.P. Shelepugin said that when crossing the river. Sozh 357th separate army penal company captured a small foothold. For three days and three nights she held a piece of land, repulsing numerous enemy attacks. In the battles for the bridgehead, the company lost over a hundred people killed and about three hundred wounded.

I.I. Korzhik: "By mid-March, out of 1,200 former officers, forty-eight of us remained in the battalion. Were the penalty boxers suicide bombers? I think yes! When out of 1200 people in the battalion 48 remained in the ranks - is that not enough? And here's another fact. During one of the attacks, we came under heavy fire from six-barreled mortars, and some of the soldiers tried to move away and hide in the forest. They were detained by a detachment and shot. It was a great happiness to survive the penalty box"?

I. Pichugin: "One can judge how they fought at least by one battle of the 275th company. During the breakthrough of the Nazi defenses near the town of Rogachev in Belorussia in July 1944, only 27 out of 350 "penalty boxers" survived. Of the command staff, only I was wounded. I was awarded the Order of the Red Banner."

1 See: Yu.V. Rubiov. Penal boxes of the Great Patriotic War. In life and on the screen / Yu.V. Rubtsov. S. 184.

2 Ibid. S. 185.

3 Cit. Quoted from: Rubtsov Yu.V. To whom to serve a term to the order, but to whom - to the "tower" // Independent military review. 2006. April 28.

4 Cit. Cited from: Pichugin I. "Penal battalions go into the breakthrough" // Krymskiye Izvestiya. No. 109 (3583). 2006. June 17.

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Z.M. Buniyatov: "I was entrusted with an extremely dangerous task: to overcome the triple line of defense of the enemy and go deep into the rear. We had to take the mined bridge 80 meters long across the Pilica River, while keeping the bridge intact, as military equipment had to pass through it. And we accomplished this task, but at what cost! In this battle, out of 670 fighters, 47 survived. How many I buried then, how many letters I wrote to their relatives! All the survivors were awarded military orders."

G.M. Dubinin: "Let's go in a chain, 8-10 steps apart, quietly, without shouting. The German did not fire. How long, I don't know. Suddenly a mine burst. The chain is stuck. Moans, screams blown up, curses against our sappers that not everything was done as it should, removing the mines. And then the Germans began shelling, and, of course, new losses. It worked out, it's impossible to go back - they'll kill their own, there's no way forward either ... I'll tell you from memory that after that day half of the personnel were written off (about 70 people) "2.

V.E. Kopylov: "Somehow the divisional commander called me and ordered me to take the village at any cost. 180 people went on the attack. The order was carried out, but after the battle there were no more than 60 in the battalion. And, thank God, the Nazis had neither artillery nor mortars in this sector. Most of my subordinates escaped with injuries. And for them it meant everything.

1 Cited. Quoted from: Nikolaev V. Through the minefield // Novye Izvestia. 2005. May 6.

2 Quot. Quoted from: Rubtsov Yu.V. To whom to serve a term to the order, but to whom - to the "tower" // Independent military review. 2006. April 28.

3 Cit. Quoted from: Awards drenched in blood (Veteran's Tale) // Military Knowledge. 1996. No. 7 (July). C. 4.

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M.G. Klyuchko: "I didn't know how many personnel entered the battle and how many left it. The fighting went on non-stop. Behind the first line of the front was the second. While one makes up for losses, the other continues the battle. And so constantly. Frontier abroad. I clearly remember the battles near Brest. They took skyscrapers. So there from the company almost no one was left alive. I was wounded and shell-shocked. My parents received a notice of my death."

According to A. Moroz, from August 1942 to October 1945, 3,348 penal soldiers passed through the 1st, 60th, and 128th separate penal companies, of which 796 died, 1,939 were injured, 117 were released after the expiration of the period established by order, and 457 - ahead of schedule, and about 1% of the penalty boxers fell behind on the marches, deserted, were captured by the enemy and went missing. In total, 62 officers served in the company at different times, of which 16 were killed, 17 were injured (three of the wounded were later killed)>. During the fighting on the Kursk Bulge, the 8th separate penal battalion of the Central Front lost 143 people killed and 375 wounded?.

The authors of the work "Russia and the USSR in the Wars of the 20th Century: A Statistical Study" also write about the large losses of penal units and subunits. Only in 1944 did the total losses of personnel (killed, dead, wounded and sick) of all penal units

1 Cited. Quoted from: Savchin D. Penal boxes did not shout "Hurrah!" // Mirror of the week. No. 20 (293). 2000. 20-26 May.

2 See: Moroz A. Penal company // Red Star. 2007. April 11.

3 Frost A. Redemption by blood. How the 8th separate penal battalion fought from the Volga to the Oder // Krasnaya Zvezda. 2006. June 16.

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amounted to 170,298 permanent staff and penalty box. The average monthly loss of permanent and variable composition reached 14,191 people, or 52% of their average monthly number (27,326 people)!. This was 3-6 times more than the average monthly loss of personnel in conventional troops in the same offensive operations in 1944.

The penitentiaries, as we have seen, acted mostly courageously in the performance of combat missions. But there were also cases of cowardice, cowardice, which were severely punished by the command of penal units and subunits. M.I. writes about this. Suknev, recalling the defensive actions of his battalion near the village of Slutka in November 1943. At that time, two “basmachi-penalty men” who committed crossbows were shot by order of the battalion commander?

P.D. Barabolya told how two penitentiaries killed an elderly couple in the village of Kilyakovka, and their 12-year-old granddaughter was raped. The visiting session of the military tribunal sentenced both penalized men to death. “At my twenty-three years old, I managed to see enough of death in the face, I saw how people die,” Barabolya notes. - How many times the heart sank at the same time! But the public execution of two bandits did not evoke the slightest compassion.

I.N. Tretyakov: “There were gross violations. I remember two cases of going to the enemy. One succeeded,  
WTO

1 See: Russia and the USSR in the wars of the twentieth century: Statistical research. S. 441.

2See: Suknev M.I. Notes of the penal battalion commander. Memoirs of a battalion commander. 1941-1945. - M.: ZAO Tsentrpoligraf, 2007. S. 157- 158.

3 Cit. Quoted from: Living memory. Great Patriotic War: the truth about the war. In Zt. T. 1. S. 357-338.

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In another case, the defector was eliminated. There were cases of going to the rear. They were sent on the wanted list from among the fines. If found, then the guys dealt with the deserters themselves and, as they say, without the use of weapons!

During the fighting, some penalized under the guise of “wounded” tried to evade the fight and get rehabilitation. For example, the company commander of the 9th separate assault battalion of the 1st Ukrainian Front, Captain Bazdyrev, reported on September 20, 1944: “N.V. Semenenko went to the hospital, leaving the machine gun behind and not reporting to anyone, due to illness, without expiating his guilt. Bluvshstein Yakov Aronovich, Valchuk Karp Pavlovich fraudulently, under the guise of: the first one was shell-shocked, and the second left the battlefield with a slight tangential wound”<sup>2</sup>.

A.V. Pylytsyn in his book “Penalty Shot, or How an Officer's Penal Battalion Reached Berlin” gives an example of how, during an enemy artillery raid, among the penalty boxers, lightly wounded by shrapnel in soft tissues, usually in the buttocks, began to appear. This interested the employees of the Special Department. “It turns out that during an artillery attack, under the roar of shell explosions, the “inventors” of this method threw a hand grenade into some wooden shed,” writes Pylytsyn, “and then picked out its fragments from its walls. After that, a bullet was taken out and thrown out of the submachine gun cartridge, half of the gunpowder was poured out, and a fragment of a suitable size was inserted instead of the bullet. And then it's a matter of technology. In the next artillery attack, this machine gun was fired at some soft spot - and received a “light wound”,

1 Cited. Quoted from: Rubtsov Yu.V. Penal boxes of the Great Patriotic War. In life and on the screen / Yu.V. Rubtsov. — M.: Veche, 2007. S. 135.

2 Ibid. pp. 139-140. 119

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and hence the desired freedom. True, when this trick was figured out, almost all the "cunning" were caught in the troops and tried again, now for deliberate self-mutilation and actual desertion from the penal battalion. Not all "wise men" returned to SB. Some, taking into account their previous "merits", were sentenced to the highest measure and shot. The bulk of the witnesses to these executions met the sentences with approval. In general, cowards and similar "inventors" in the officer penal battalion were treated, to put it mildly, negatively.

The Regulations on penal battalions and companies noted that "on completion of the appointed term, the penal prisoners are presented by the command of the battalion (company) to the military council of the front (army) for release." In addition, "for military distinction, a penal may be released ahead of schedule," and "for particularly outstanding military distinction, a penal, in addition, is presented with a government award." The regulations also determined that "penalty men who were wounded in battle are considered to have served their sentence." Let's see how it was carried out in practice

these provisions.

A.V. Pylytsyn: "We, platoon commanders, urgently wrote the characteristics of the report on all the penalized prisoners, on the basis of which both the release of the penalized ones and their rewarding took place. And our battalion commander Osipov presented the battalion officers for awards. In the matter of awarding, much, if not all, depended on the command. Here, General Gorbatov freed all the penalized men who had been in the rear of the Germans, regardless of whether the lawsuit

1 Cited. Quoted from: Pylytsyn A.V. Free kick, or How an officer's penal battalion reached Berlin. pp. 64-65.

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they drank their guilt with blood or were not wounded, but simply honestly and bravely fought.

I am talking about this here because there were other army commanders in which the battalion had to perform combat missions of various complexity and danger. However, the reaction of many of them to the award was very different from Gorbatov's. So, the commander of the 65th Army, General Batov Pavel Ivanovich, in case of any successful action of the battalion, decided to justify only those penalized soldiers who died or were injured due to injury ... |

Returning to the time we wrote the combat characteristics for the penalized, I will say that these documents, after the signature of the company commanders, were handed over to the battalion headquarters. They already compiled lists of people to be released. The path of these papers lay further through the headquarters of the army to the army or front tribunal, and from there to the headquarters of the front. Orders for reinstatement in officer rank were signed personally by the commander of the front! |

A.V. Pylytsyn further writes that several groups of representatives from the army and front tribunals and the front headquarters came to the battalion, who examined characteristics in the presence of platoon or company commanders, removed their official convictions, and reinstated them in military ranks. Along with this, decisions were made on the return of awards and the relevant documents were issued. After all this, officers restored in all rights were sent, as a rule, to their own units,

1 Cited. Quoted from: Pylytsyn A.V. Free kick, or How an officer's penal battalion reached Berlin. S. 30.

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and former "encirclement" - to the regiment of the reserve officers.

N.G. Gudoshnikov: "After one of the battles, the company commander called me and ordered me to draw up the so-called reinforcing list for all the penalized soldiers," he recalled, "in which all the soldier's ammunition is affixed against each name. "We're going to rehabilitate the guys and hand them over to replenish the neighboring regiment," the company commander explained to me. - They fought well. Some stayed with us longer than expected. Consider that everyone has atoned for their guilt. Explain it to them." "Where are we?" I asked. "We are in formation. A new company is already waiting for us in the reserve regiment. You can't gather everyone in one place, you can't build them, and I announced rehabilitation to several at once, one by one. To my surprise, I did not see or hear any sigh of relief, or a joyful exclamation, or any other emotions. Some of my platoon even regretted that we would have to leave... Then the commanders from the neighboring regiment came to our location, and we handed over the soldiers to them right on the combat positions!

Yu.V. Rubtsov in his book "Penal Boxes of the Great Patriotic War: in Life and on the Screen" tells about the fate of V.P. Shchennikov, former commander of the rifle battalion of the 1052nd rifle regiment of the 301st rifle division of the 5th shock army of the 4th Ukrainian Front. He served in the 9th separate penal battalion of the 1st Ukrainian Front. In a description of Shchennikov, the commander of the guard platoon, Lieutenant Balachan, wrote: "When attacking a heavily fortified enemy defense line on July 8, 1944,

1 Cited. Quoted from: Rubtsov Yu.V. To whom to serve a term to the order, to whom - to the "tower" // Independent military review. 2006. April 28.

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being the first number of a light machine gun, he suppressed the enemy's firing point, which made it possible for the rest to advance. When his second number failed, he took the disks and continued to advance in battle formations... During the exit from the battlefield, he took out 2 light machine guns, 2 rifles, 4 machine guns and one wounded squad leader. Worthy of a government award! On the description is the resolution of the commander of the guard company, captain Poluektov: "Comrade. Shchennikov deserves early rehabilitation."

A.V. Belyaev: "Only those penalty boxers were rehabilitated who atoned for their guilt directly in battle. As far as I remember, we did not have a single case of rehabilitating those who did not participate in the battles "?,

I.N. Tretyakov: "Not only the wounded could be rehabilitated ahead of schedule. By order of our commander, such an order was introduced. In the offensive, a specific combat mission was set. When fulfilling it, as soon as they left the battlefield, a military tribunal was called from the army, he removed the criminal record and handed over a certificate of this. As for the awards upon serving the term - we did not have this. We tried to present to them, but they answered us: "The penal is atoning for his guilt, why should he be rewarded" ?.

N. Tarasenko: "In the course of the battle, my two comrades and I ended up on the left flank of the battalion chain and our

1 Cited. Quoted from: Rubtsov Yu.V. Penal boxes of the Great Patriotic War. In life and on the screen / Yu.V. Rubtsov. S. 196.

2 Quot. Quoted from: Rubtsov Yu.V. To whom to serve a term to the order, but to whom - to the "tower" // Independent military review. 2006. April 28.

3 Ibid.

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they secured a successful attack with intense fire. The battle was over for us, the success of the battalion was picked up and developed by infantry units. I and two of my comrades were recalled to the battalion headquarters and an amnesty was declared. In the confusion of front roads, I found my regiment. He suffered great losses. Replenishment came, and ordered to form a platoon. Heavy fighting began, with heavy losses, in the foreground of Koenigsberg. In the battles he received a concussion, wound. He refused hospitalization. I met Victory Day in the echelon. On August 9, 1945, war was declared on Japan, and the regiment crossed the border of Manchuria. Hubei, Bamyangtun, Mudanjiang, Harbin are the stages of this blitzkrieg. At the end of the fighting, I was recalled. For the steadfastness and heroism shown in the battles in East Prussia and in the war with Japan, by the decision of the tribunal, they were completely released from serving their sentences with the removal of a criminal record!

E.A. Golbreich: "The penalty was removed by the first injury. Or much less often - upon serving the term. Sometimes, after the wounded, a petition was sent to the military prosecutor for the removal of a criminal record. This concerned mainly demoted officers, but sometimes criminals were also written for their courage and heroism. Very rarely, and, as a rule, if, after being wounded, the penal did not leave the battlefield or performed a feat, he was presented for a reward. We did not know about the results of our petitions, there was no feedback"?

G.G. Vysotsky: "Soldiers convicted by a military tribunal and demoted officers, former  
concluding

1 Cited. Quoted from: Rubtsov Yu.V. Penal boxes of the Great Patriotic War. In life and on the screen / Yu.V. Rubtsov. S. 148.

2 Quot. by: There was no one to replace them. Memoirs of a front-line soldier Yefim Abslevich Golbreich // Krymskaya Pravda. 2006. August 23.

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The prisoners atoned for their personal guilt before the state with their blood, many for their courage were awarded orders and medals, and became part of the military units!

D. Debolsky: "Most of them fought before the first wound or two months later left for other units on the orders of the company commander for their bravery. And for the battle near Berezovets, the conviction was expunged from all the company's fines, most were awarded orders and medals, and I received a rare order of Alexander Nevsky"2?.

Penitentiaries who deserved rehabilitation received an appropriate document. For example, S.L. Aria was handed the following certificate at the military tribunal of the 151st Infantry Division: "Issued to senior sergeant Aria Semyon Lvovich that he was sued for his courage and courage in the fight against fascism dimness. Chairman of the military tribunal 151 sd military lawyer of the 3rd rank Sorokin"3.

A. Moroz writes: "Rehabilitation is often, but not always, furnished with a certain solemnity. An order was announced to the troops before the formation, representatives of the headquarters and the political department of the front returned orders and medals to those restored in their rights, and later they also handed over field shoulder straps with the same insignia. Orders were issued on the hands: one - to depart for

1 Gordienko A. Each of his orders is a memory of a company // East Siberian Truth. No. 24 248. 2002. June 20.

2 Quot. Quoted from: Bakanov V. Truth and Fables. On fines and suicide bombers of the Great Patriotic War // Magnitogorsk metal. 2004. April 29.

3 Cit. Quoted from: Rubtsov Yu.V. Penal boxes of the Great Patriotic War. In life and on the screen / Yu.V. Rubtsov. S. 149.

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his unit, others - to a separate regiment of the reserve officers, the third (on special instructions) - to the personnel department of the district!

In the book by Yu.V. Rubtsov "Penal boxes of the Great Patriotic War. In life and on the screen" is an example of the early release of an entire unit for military distinctions. In July 1944, when the troops of the 1st Ukrainian Front (commanded by Marshal of the Soviet Union I.S. Konev) carried out the Lvov-Sandomierz offensive operation, one of the companies of the 9th separate penal battalion distinguished itself. She, numbering 245 people, under the command of the guard captain I.A. Poluektova supported the actions of one of the rifle regiments of the 24th Samara-Ulyanovsk Iron Rifle Division for ten days. Reconnaissance in force was successfully carried out, a tactically advantageous line was captured, a lot of enemy manpower was destroyed, and several firing points were suppressed. According to the results of the battle of the penalty box, the division commander, Major General F.A. Prokhorov made the following conclusion: "All personnel are subject to withdrawal from the combat formations of the unit for full rehabilitation and restoration of all rights to the rank of an officer of the Red Army"<sup>2</sup>. 11 people, in addition, were recognized as worthy of state awards.

By order of the Military Council of the 31st Army, all personnel of a separate penal company of the 116th Infantry Division were prematurely expelled from the penal company for excellent performance of a combat mission and transferred to

1 Cited. Quoted from: Frost A. Redemption by blood. How the 8th separate penal battalion fought from the Volga to the Oder // Krasnaya Zvezda. 2006. June 16.

2 Quot. Quoted from: Rubtsov Yu.V. Penal boxes of the Great Patriotic War. In life and on the screen / Yu.V. Rubtsov. - M.: Veche, 2007. S. 144-145.

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den in linear rifle units, and the company was disbanded'.

And here is what was said in the order of the commander of the troops of the 1st Belorussian Front, General of the Army K.K. Rokossovsky No. 0988 dated June 11, 1944: "Former commander of the pulrota of the 4th rifle regiment of the 10th reserve rifle brigade Captain Mikhail Sergeevich Khokhlov, born in 1913, a native of the Bashkir Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, Ufa, st. Tabotskaya, 41. Russian, employee, non-party, education: general - 8 classes, military - infantry school in 1938, in the Red Army since 1934. In the battalion (we are talking about the 8th separate penal battalion. - Comp.) Arrived on April 7, 1944 for a period of 2 months according to the verdict of the military tribunal of the 10th zsbr, convicted under Art. 193-3 (for unauthorized leaving the battlefield during the battle. - Comp.) for a period of 8 years ITL. During his stay in the battalion, he showed himself to be a brave and determined fighter. On June 13, 1944, participating in intelligence, he acted energetically and boldly. Received a blind wound in the lumbar region with damage to the right renal capsule, hospitalized"? In total, 20 penalized officers were rehabilitated by this order.

By order of the commander of the troops of the 1st Belorussian Front, Marshal of the Soviet Union G.K. Zhukov No. 0394 dated May 7, 1945, the entire variable composition of the 8th separate penal battalion was

reinstated in the rights of officers and military ranks. Despite this, until July 20, those from

1 See: Rubtsov Yu.V. Penal boxes of the Great Patriotic War. In life and on the screen / Yu.V. Rubtsov. — M.: Veche, 2007. S. 145.

2 Quot. Quoted from: Frost A. Redemption by blood. How the 8th separate penal battalion fought from the Volga to the Oder // Krasnaya Zvezda. 2006. June 16.

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guilty, whom the end of the war caught on their way to a separate penal battalion. They were expelled after the preparation of the relevant documents on the basis of the order of the commander of the front troops No. 0467 dated June 10!.

After the completion of the Yelninsko-Dorogobuzh offensive operation, in which the 60th separate penal company of the 68th Army took part, 10 people who showed courage in the battle near the village of Yushkovo were sent ahead of schedule to the 159th rifle division, and two - in the 3rd engineer-sapper brigade.

In the 1st Shock Army (commanded by Major General G.P. Korotkov), the process of exemption from punishment was carried out as follows. "In March, along with replenishment, 1720 penalized soldiers arrived in the 53rd and 7th Guards Rifle Divisions of the 1st Shock Army," writes Yu.V. Rubtsov. - 1200 penal soldiers arrived in the 53rd Guards Rifle Division, of which three companies were formed. The 1st company was attached to the 161st Guards Rifle Regiment. The regiment was tasked with liberating the villages of Verevkino and Kozlovo. The regiment completed this task, the penalists were the first to break into the village. One of the penalty boxers was the first to go up the hill and hoisted a red flag there, but was immediately wounded. The penitentiaries fought themselves outrageously and courageously. Among the penalty boxers there were heavy losses in killed and wounded - about 60% of the personnel. Major General Kleshnin and the commander of the penal company, Captain Belozertsev, gave a good

1 Frost A. Redemption by blood. How the 8th separate penal battalion fought from the Volga to the Oder // Krasnaya Zvezda. 2006. June 17.

2 See: Moroz A. Penal company // Red Star. 2007. April 11. 128

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evaluation of penal fighters. Immediately after the battle, 50 people received guards badges. From March 19 to March 22, 40 requests from the command for release from punishment were granted. In the 53rd army penal company in the first days of March, 520 penalists arrived. From March 9 to March 20, 1943, the company took part in the battles for the capture of the village of Borok and the village of Semushkina Gorushka. During the fighting, 369 were wounded, 100 were killed. Only 3 people were convicted of the fines. In the first days of the fighting, 3 servicemen of the penal company were presented for awards. By March 22, 100 petitions for release from punishment had been received, and 3 more Red Army soldiers from the penal company were presented for awards. In addition, 60 more applications will be received in the near future

P.N. Tokarev: "One of the penalized for the destruction of enemy machine guns was soon presented for the medal "For Courage", his conviction was expunged, he was released from the penal company. True, the former penalty box asked the commanders to leave him with the fighting friends he was used to. But he was transferred to a rifle company of the same division.

MS Brovko participated in Belarus in the battles on the river. Pronya. Then, out of 118 penalty boxers, only 32 survived. Mikhail Stepanovich received three wounds, was awarded the medal "For Military Merit", and his conviction was CLEARED.



1 Cited. Quoted from: Rubtsov Yu.V. Penal boxes of the Great Patriotic War. In life and on the screen / Yu.V. Rubtsov. pp. 145-146.

2 Quot. Quoted from: There is such a profession - to defend the Motherland // Il Tumen. No. 5 (476). 2007. July 13.

3 See: Yermishina L. Visiting... // Priazovsky worker. No. 64. 2007. July 4.

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Among the awarded former penalty boxers: I.I. Korzhik - Order of the Red Star, N.I. Saprygin - Order of Glory 3rd degree, G.M. Dubinin - medal "For Courage". In the penal units of the 64th Army during the fighting near Stalingrad from. 1,023 people released from punishment for courage were awarded: the Order of Lenin - 1, the Order of the Patriotic War of the 2nd degree - 1, the Red Star - 17, the medals "For Courage" and "For Military Merit" - 134 people !. |

A. Moroz also cites an extract from the order on the rehabilitation of female penitentiaries who operated as part of the 8th separate penal battalion of the Central Front. "During the period of offensive battles in the area of the village of Sokovnik (now the Konyshovsky district of the Kursk region. - Note by A. Moroz), the order of the front commander, Colonel General K.K. Rokossovsky, - a former fighter of variable composition Lukyanchikova Pelageya Ivanovna, acting as an orderly of a rifle company, self-sacrificingly despising death, assisted the wounded directly on the battlefield. During the fighting from July 15 to July 24 (1943 - Comp.), she carried out 47 wounded soldiers with their weapons. Noting the heroism shown by Comrade Lukyanchikova, I express gratitude to her and present her to the government at the city.

During the Rogachev-Zhlobin operation of 1944, the 8th separate penal battalion distinguished itself, which, by order of the command of the 3rd Army, acted

1 See: Rubtsov Yu.V. Penal boxes of the Great Patriotic War. In life and on the screen / Yu.V. Rubtsov. S. 202.

2 Quot. Quoted from: Frost A. Redemption by blood. How the 8th separate penal battalion fought from the Volga to the Oder // Krasnaya Zvezda. 2006. June 16.

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behind enemy lines. "For the successful completion of a combat mission," writes A.V. Pylytsyn, - as the army commander promised, all the variable composition (penalty boxes) were, as they would say now, rehabilitated, many were awarded military awards: Orders of Glory III degree, medals "For Courage" and "For Combat servants"!

A. Moroz in the article "Penal Company" notes that in the 1st (60th, then 128th) separate penal company, 43 Red Army soldiers and sergeants of variable composition were awarded government awards, including the Orders of the Red Star, Glory 3rd class, medals "For Courage" and "For Military Merit"2.

However, the penalty boxers did not always receive government awards.

P.D. Barabolya: "Those battles were difficult and terrible, but not a single commander of our company, except for Captain Matveev, was awarded a single order. Only in 1944, for participation in the Battle of Stalingrad, I was awarded the Order of the Patriotic War, 1st class"3.

E.A. Holbreich: "Officers of the permanent composition of the penal units were not spoiled with awards very generously ... In the award lists they wrote "commander of a shock battalion" (or company), avoiding the word "penalty". If in the infantry a battalion commander who broke through the fortified defenses of the enemy could immediately be presented with a high award, up to the highest rank, then

1 Cited. Quoted from: Pylytsyn A.V. Free kick, or How an officer's penal battalion reached Berlin. S. 43.

2 See: Moroz A. Penal company // Red Star. 2007. April 11.

3 Cit. Quoted from: Living memory. Great Patriotic War: the truth about the war. In Zt. T. 1.S. 364.

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we were looked upon as 'breakthrough specialists'. Like, this is your daily work and front-line share. What else do you want?"

The penalty box received not only orders and medals. For example, 19-year-old V.I. Yermak, who fought as part of a separate penal battalion, was awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union (posthumously). In official publications, he is listed as a shooter of the 14th separate rifle battalion of the 67th Army of the Leningrad Front. On July 19, 1943, during reconnaissance in combat in the area of the Sinyavinsky Heights (near Leningrad), Vladimir Ivanovich closed the embrasure of an enemy bunker with his body, which ensured the fulfillment of a combat mission by a group of scouts. The title of Hero of the Soviet Union was awarded on February 21, 1944 posthumously?. Immortalized in the Sinyavino Heights memorial.

V.V. Karpov was awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union on June 4, 1944 for the fact that "in August-September 1943, during the fighting in the Dukhovshchinsky district of the Smolensk region, more than 30 times with a group of scouts penetrated into the enemy rear, participated in the capture of 35 prisoners - NYH "3,

M.I. Kikosh became a Hero of the Soviet Union on October 30, 1943. According to some reports, at that time he commanded the 3rd Penal Company of the 65th Army. Officially, "company commander of the 120th Infantry Regiment (69th Infantry Division of the 65th Army of the Central Front) Senior Lieutenant Kikosh with a company on October 15

1 Cited. Quoted from: Rubtsov Yu.V. Penal boxes of the Great Patriotic War. In life and on the screen / Yu.V. Rubtsov. pp. 203-204.

2 See: Heroes of the Soviet Union. Brief biographical dictionary. V. 2 vol. T. 1. - M., 1987. S. 483.

3 See: Vorobyov M.V., Khrapchenkov A.K. In battles on Smolensk land. - M., 1975. S. 185-187.

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In 1943, he was among the first to cross the Dnieper near the village of Radul (Repkinsky district of the Chernihiv region), seized and held a bridgehead, ensuring the crossing of the regiment's units.

According to the recollections of the participants in the war, some of the penalized were also released in violation of the Regulations on penal battalions and companies.

I. Suman: "...While the penal company was in some village, a German bombed the power plant there. She was so small, but she was enough for the village. I realized that this is my only chance. I can do whatever you want with my hands. I came to the company commander and said: — I can fix the station. If you do, I'll send you back to the unit. So, I spent three weeks in the penal company and never fired a shot during this time.

However, not always the penalty box waited for their rehabilitation. For example, at the end of August 1942, German troops ran into fierce resistance from the Red Army units in the area of Lake Sapra. In these battles, the penal battalion attached to the 91st Rifle Division especially distinguished itself. The political administration of the Stalingrad Front petitioned A.S. Shcherbakov: "The soldiers redeemed their guilt with heroism and must be rehabilitated. They should be returned to the units in which they served before. But before it was done, almost

1 See: Heroes of the Soviet Union. Brief biographical dictionary. V. 2 t. T. 1. - M., 1987. S. 647.

2 Quot. Quoted from: Volynets A. Different faces of the war // Nevskoe Vremya No. 154 (1557). 1997. August 28.

3 Cit. Quoted from: Beevor E. Stalingrad / Per. from English. A. Zhrebilova, A. Konopleva, A. Marchenko, A. Feldsherov; artist P. Trofimov. - Smolensk: Rusich, 1999. S. 133.

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the entire variable composition of this battalion died in subsequent battles.

After the victory over Germany, Deputy Commissar of Defense N.A. On July 18, 1945, Bulganin signed Order No. 41, in which he announced to the leadership the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR of July 7, 1945 "On amnesty in connection with the victory over Nazi Germany"!. The amnesty applied to servicemen convicted with a suspended sentence in accordance with Note 2 to Art. 28 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR and the corresponding articles of the Criminal Codes of other union republics; persons convicted of military crimes under Articles 193-2, 193-5, 193-6, 193-7, 193-9, 193-10, 193-10a, 193-14, 193-15 and 193-16 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR and relevant articles of the Criminal Codes of other Union Republics. This amnesty also extended to fines.

The memoirs and testimonies of participants in the Great Patriotic War, mainly those who directly served in penal formations, speak in great detail about how penal battalions and companies were formed and used.

1 See: Russian Archive: Great Patriotic War: Orders of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR (1943-1945). - T. 13 (2-3). — M.: TERRA, 1997. S. 389.2

Moroz A. V. BLOOD Atonement

... Penal battalions and companies went through the whole war. Moreover, today very, very few people know that during the preparations for the war with Japan in the Far East, the creation of penal units was also envisaged. On the Trans-Baikal Front, for example, the permanent composition of the penal battalion was formed from officers of the 26th district school of snipers, and the head of this school, Major Fedor Stepanovich Marchenko, became the battalion commander. However, the 3rd separate penal battalion of the Trans-Baikal Front (earlier, under this number, the OSHB of the Kalinin (1st Baltic) Front fought) because of the transience of the war in Manchuria, they did not have time to equip it with a variable composition. The tactical capabilities of the penal battalions and companies were modest, and their role in the course of hostilities was small. After all, these are ordinary rifle units with an unusual staffing. Their arsenal contains only light weapons and sacrifice. And penal units were not abolished on the way to victory, mainly because many were helped to defend their good name and honor, avoid or get rid of a criminal record, and return home unstained from the war. And if you die, then the death of the brave.

In these notes, based on archival materials, which were rarely consulted, I would like to talk about the use

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torii of the 8th separate penal battalion of the Stalingrad (Don, Central, Belorussian, 1st Belorussian) Front. This OShB had a particularly long and difficult combat path - from Stalingrad, the Volga to the Oder and Berlin. Immediately after the announcement of Order No. 227 in August 1942, on the Stalingrad Front, they began to form two penal battalions according to temporary states: the 1st and 2nd. The numbers were also temporary, for intra-front use. By the end of September, it became clear that the front, now the Donskoy, would not be able to complete two penal battalions. By order of the troops No. 09/0125 of September 30, 1942, the 2nd OShB was disbanded, and its command and political staff in the amount of 33 people was sent to resupply the 1st. The history of the 1st penal battalion, which would later become the 8th, is opened by the order by which Guards Major Yakov Fedorovich Grigoriev announced his assumption of the position of battalion commander. Battalion commissar Pavel Prokhorovich Lavrenyuk was appointed military commissar of the battalion, Captain Grigory Ivanovich Loban was appointed chief of staff. The operative officer of the special department of the NKVD of the front, lieutenant of state security Efimov Pavel Timofeevich, was assigned to the battalion. The permanent core of the OShB, in addition to the commander and commissar, consisted of the deputy battalion commander (for the combat unit), officers of the headquarters and political apparatus, commanders and political instructors of three rifle companies and a company of anti-tank rifles, platoon commanders, several quartermasters, a military doctor and military paramedic. In addition to officers, six sergeants and Red Army men (a clerk-captain, a medical instructor and four porters) served in the companies on a permanent basis. The supply platoon and the commandant's platoon, which was later provided by the state, consisted only of non-penalized men. On August 15, 1942 in

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The 1st ShB of the Stalingrad Front included 95 permanent servicemen (of which 29 were overtime until further notice).

These were battle-tested people. The commander and military commissar of the OShB were selected and approved by the Military Council of the Front. The battalion commander and headquarters were allowed to look for suitable company and platoon commanders in the Separate Regiment of the Reserve Officers (POROS) and expel those who did not justify their hopes. The commander of the 8th OShB used this right. "For an attempt to evade a business trip to the front line," we read in one of the orders, "I remove the commander of the rifle company, Captain Yukhta Ivan Danilovich, from his post, send him to the personnel department of the front and petition the Military Council to reduce him up to the rank of lieutenant. Several platoon commanders were also seconded. The difficulties of serving in the OShB, the need to share all the dangers with the penalized officers of the permanent staff were compensated by the opportunity to receive a rank one step higher than the regular category and preferential length of service: a day was counted as six.

From the first days of August, the battalion, which was being formed in the village of Samofalovka (now the Dubovsky district of the Volgograd region. - Note by A. Moroz), began to receive variable fighters, that is, demoted to ordinary yesterday's officers. Of these, rifle companies and an anti-tank rifle company were sequentially recruited until they were full. Meanwhile, the battalion, having left Samofalovka, was moving around the farms of Ternovka, Popov, and Shiryayevsky. During the entire war, it, like other penal units, was never deployed in a large settlement. And he did not liberate a single large settlement, each time solving auxiliary tasks, although

the most dangerous.

The documentation of the penal battalion was exemplary. August 19

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hundred 1942 was sent to the hospital wounded the first fighter-variable, senior lieutenant. On the same day, during a German air raid on the Kotluban station, a fragment killed the commander of the 1st rifle company, Captain Spiridon Cherny. He was buried in Samofalovka at the village cemetery. Major Grigoriev, who used the disciplinary power of the division commander, announced the first penalty, a strict arrest of the guards, to two change soldiers (senior lieutenants) for stealing building materials from a neighboring collective farm to equip the battalion. The first in the battalion to receive gratitude was the head of the medical service, a military doctor of the 3rd rank, Rodina (the initials could not be established). Under fire from the enemy, she provided first aid to the wounded chief financial officer and carried him out along with the battalion valuables.

Battalion commander Grigoriev and military commissar Lavrenyuk received their first combat mission from the front headquarters on October 2, 1942: to form a marching company of 116 people, transfer to it a battalion convoy - 6 horses and 3 wagons, equip it with 2 heavy and 12 light machine guns, 36 PPSH submachine guns and 60 rifles and send along the route Ternovka-Shiryaevsky-B. Ivanovka- Loznoye at the disposal of the commander of the 24th Army, Major General I.V. Galanina. By the end of October 3, concentrate in the village of Sadki. I would like to convey in detail the spirit of the combat orders of the front-line time, their specifics. The first serious losses OSHB suffered in the area of height 108.4, which is near the village of Kotluban. There, as stated in the order, having shown courage and bravery, 19 fighters-variables and one platoon commander died a death, 28 fighters-variables were injured. All the dead were buried on the southern slopes of the same height. On November 3, 1942, Major Grigoriev's guards were replaced by Major Dmitry Ermolaevich Burkov as commander of the 1st Special Operations Brigade. Than volume

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was the change clear? The penal battalion was used, as it was then expressed, "fractionally" and rarely solved combat missions with a full complement. Companies were usually allocated from him at the disposal of armies, corps and divisions. Company and platoon commanders received good combat practice and grew tactically. The battalion commander with the headquarters and political apparatus was more engaged in training and education, training of marching units, control over their use, and how the organizer of the battle could degrade. This was the reason for the periodic change.

On November 25, 1942, by order of the head of the Main Organizational Staff Directorate of the Main Upraform of the Red Army No. org. /2/78950 the penal battalions of all fronts were given numbers. The 1st OSHB of the Don Front received the number 8 and fought under it until victory. What was the variable composition of the penal battalion? From August 1 to December 30, 1942, the former chief of staff of the division, chief of staff of the tank brigade, head of the political department of the rifle brigade, military commissars of the division, tank and rifle brigades, 12 commanders regiments and 5 battalion commanders, 40 company and battery commanders, 26 political instructors, 81 platoon commanders. The head of the hospital, the head of the warehouse of the NCO of the USSR, together with the military commissar of the same warehouse, the district military commissar, the head of the military department, the executive secretary of the Komsomol bureau, the head of the club, the secretary of the military tribunal, the detective special department of the NKVD, military assistant.

I had to stand on the defensive, go on the attack in the ranks of the penalized 4 air unit commanders, 2 squadron navigators, 8 aircraft technicians, 2 flight mechanics. For the sake of fairness, it should be noted that some of the penal officers had "squares" in their buttonholes.

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The battalion commander, by his order, promoted them to sergeants and appointed squad commanders.

How did the penitentiaries live near Stalingrad? Like the whole army in those days, it was incredibly hard. The daily routine, approved by the Guards Major Grigoriev, provided for 10 hours of classes, but dinner was not listed in the schedule. Hot food from August 15 to November 27 was prepared only for breakfast and lunch. And what food! Military doctor of the 3rd rank Motherland reported on command; half of the flour is unsuitable for baking bread, there is no salt, potatoes for the last twenty days - too. Of the vegetables, only pickles and tomatoes are available. Vitamin products have not been received since the founding of the battalion. On December 30 and 31, 1942, all meals for breakfast and lunch were prepared from wheat flour. But the days were New Year's Eve, like holidays, and the enemy, remember, by that time was already in a trap. You read the report of the battalion doctor, full of bitterness, and you feel even more fully the greatness of the feat of our compatriots near Stalingrad. Up to a third of the soldiers and officers remained sick in the ranks, fought, as stated in the document, with manifestations of tularemia, stomach pain, flatulence (bloating), and high fever. They carried everything. They survived and won.

Near Stalingrad, there were many rehabilitated ahead of schedule - for courage in battle. But those restored to their ranks posthumously, too. From August 1 to December 30, 1942, out of 177 people sent there by order of "cowardice" and 154 by court order, 71 were killed and 138 were injured in the 8th OSHB. Rehabilitation was often, but not always, arranged with a certain solemnity. An order was announced to the troops before the formation, representatives of the headquarters and political administration of the front returned orders and medals to those restored in their rights, and later they also handed over field shoulder straps with the same insignia.

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Orders were issued: some were to leave for their unit, others were sent to a separate regiment of the reserve officers, and the third (on special instructions) to the personnel department of the district.

Reference. Orders on the restoration of the rights of officers and military ranks were drawn up separately for the dead, the wounded, released ahead of schedule for exploits on the battlefield, who had fully served their time. The orders were detailed, with the biographical data of the officers and their brief characteristics. For example, here is an extract from order No. 0988 for the troops of the 1st Belorussian Front dated June 11, 1944: "The former commander of the pulrota of the 4th rifle regiment of the 10th reserve rifle brigade, captain Mikhail Sergeevich Khokhlov, born in 1913, native of the Bashkir ASSR, Ufa, st. Tabotskaya, 41. Russian, employee, non-party, education: general - 8 classes, military - infantry school in 1938, in the Red Army since 1934. He arrived at the battalion on April 7, 1944 for a period of 2 months by the verdict of the military tribunal of the 10th ZSBR, convicted under Art. 193-3 (for unauthorized leaving the battlefield during the battle. - A.M.) for a period of 8 years ITL. During his stay in the battalion, he showed himself to be a brave and determined fighter. On June 13, 1944, participating in intelligence, he acted energetically and boldly. He received a blind wound in the lumbar region with damage to the right renal capsule, was hospitalized.

In total, 20 penalized officers were rehabilitated by this order. In the annals of the 8th Special Operations Brigade, a case was recorded when a newly rehabilitated officer, senior lieutenant Nikolai Buravnikov, was left at his request as a platoon commander in the 2nd company of the penal battalion. On May 10, 1943, when the 8th OSHB was already far from the banks of the Volga, Guards Major Burkov transferred the powers of the battalion commander to Lieutenant Colonel Osipov Arkady Aleksandrovich. On Kursk

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arc, the battalion suffered very heavy losses. In different battles - defensive and offensive - a total of 143 people were killed and 375 were injured. Behind each of these numbers is a specific name, rehabilitation material, fate. Once in the 8th OSHB they made a big mistake: they reported that in the company, which acted in isolation from the battalion, four variable soldiers died and were buried in a mass grave, and one was missing. Three months later it turned out

that all of them were captured, managed to escape and returned from behind the front line. In the files of the battalion, on this occasion, there is an order on the front, printed in a typographical way: for the weakening of control, the provision of unverified data by the chief of staff of the 8th Special Operations Brigade, Major Nosach V.A. was transferred to the 240th Infantry Regiment as an adjutant of a regular rifle battalion, and to Lieutenant Colonel Osipov A.A. a warning was announced. The order, you see, is more or less sparing: after all, the front was commanded by K.K. Rokossovsky. Soon he awarded Osipov the title colonel.

Somewhere I had to read that, fortunately, women were not sent to the penalty box. In fact, they were not spared either. Here is an extract from the order: "During the offensive battles in the area of the village of Sokovinka (now the Konyshovsky district of the Kursk region. - A.M.), the former fighter of variable composition Pelageya Ivanovna Lukyanchikova, acting as an orderly of a rifle company, self-sacrificingly despised death, assisted the wounded directly on the battlefield. During the fighting from 15 to 24 July, it carried out 47 wounded fighters with their weapons. Noting the heroism expressed by Comrade Lukyanchikova, I express my gratitude to her and present her for a government award. Whether Pelageya Ivanovna received a well-deserved award, and which one, is unknown. The medal "For Courage" was especially valued among the penalized. words on silver

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The circle defiantly opposed the order "on cowardice." (Medics, it should be noted, in the 8th OSHB were always heroic. In March 1944, in the 1st company of the battalion, military doctor Stepan Buzun, demoted to the rank and file, fought as a variable soldier. He was wounded, presented to the order. And in the spring On the 45th, already on German soil, the Commander of the Order of the Red Star, the captain of the medical service, Buzun, returned to the battalion as a doctor. Stepan Petrovich, his doctor, was respected in the OShB for his stamina, the ability to adequately endure hardships, from which no one at the front is insured .)

Order No. 413 of the NKO of the USSR dated August 21, 1943, allowed commanders of regiments of the active army and commanders of divisions in military districts and on inactive fronts to send soldiers and sergeants to penal companies for unauthorized absences, desertion, failure to comply with orders, and some others. war crimes, if the usual disciplinary measures were not enough. This order did not apply to officers. As before, an officer could be sent to the penal battalion by the division commander, an equal or higher commander, only for violation of discipline due to cowardice or instability. That is, for criminal behavior (action or inaction) on the battlefield. For all other crimes, the fate of the perpetrator was determined by a military tribunal. If the court issued a sentence with a suspension of its execution until the end of hostilities and sent the convict to atone for guilt on the front line, the same commanders, by their orders, sent the deprived officer to the OSHB for a period of one to three months.

As the occupied territories were cleared of the enemy, a new source of replenishment of penal units gained strength. These were prisoners of war who survived and were released, as well as encircled

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lagging behind the troops. The attitude towards these people was determined by the order of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command of the Red Army No. 270 of August 16, 1941. If the order No. 227 "Not a step back" was emotional, harsh, tough, but earlier Order No. 270 - cruel and in many ways unrighteous. But orders in the army are not discussed, they are not praised or condemned, they are carried out. All those who were captured and surrounded by the enemy were checked by the commission of the Military Council of the Front. At the 1st Belorussky, it consisted of the chairman - a representative of the political department

front and two members - the senior detective of counterintelligence Smersh at the 29th Separate Regiment of the reserve officers and the deputy commander of this regiment for political affairs. The committee's conclusions were set out in the minutes. After the approval of the protocol on the title page by the front commander and a member of the Military Council, he acquired the force of an order. So, for example, according to Protocol No. 61 of May 16, 1944, 52 people were sent to the 8th Specialized School. Many on the list evoke sympathy. We read: "Zhdanov Petr Grigoryevich — military technician, head of the weapons workshop of the 77th rifle regiment of the 10th division of the NKVD, born in 1911, a native of the city of Bykhov, Mogilev region, Belarusian, worker, candidate member of the CPSU (b) since 1939, destroyed the Red Army book, education: general - 10 classes, military - courses for weapons technicians in 1938. In the Red Army from 1933 to 1934, from 1939, he had 2 wounds. On August 3, 1941, he was surrounded by a group of 30 people near the village of Podvysokoye and was wounded. Having reached Pervomaisk, then to Nikolaev, he turned back to his city. He arrived in Bykhov on October 20, 1941 and lived until October 4, 1943, being engaged in agriculture. On October 4, 1943, he joined partisan detachment No. 152 of the 11th

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brigade, where he was a platoon commander until joining the units of the Red Army on February 24, 1944, after which he was sent to the 58th Army Reserve Rifle Regiment. There are no documents confirming the veracity of the above. Zhdanova P.G. sent to a penal battalion for a period of 1 month. They do not enter the environment of their own free will. If the twice-wounded military technician Zhdanov, the partisan Zhdanov, had wine, then he undoubtedly could atone for it on the front line as part of an ordinary, not penal unit. Like many other of his brothers in tragic fate.

Colonel Arkady Osipov was one of those commanders who are called "batya" behind their backs. Including in the penal-bata. There is literary evidence for this. Already in Belarus, a graduate of the Far Eastern Infantry School, Lieutenant Alexander Pylytsyn, was selected as part of the battalion in the POLL (Separate Regiment of the Reserve Officers. - Comp.). Later he became a company commander, a major, a holder of three orders. When crossing the Oder, he was seriously wounded, and years later he published in St. Petersburg (although he lives in Ukraine) a small edition of the book "Penalty Shot". Many kind words are dedicated to Osipov in these memoirs. In particular, such an episode is given. When the 8th OSHB was at the disposal of the commander of the 3rd Army, Lieutenant General A.V. Gorbатов, Osipov suggested to the commander, instead of reconnaissance in force, a very bloody matter, to get a "language". Gorbатов agreed. At night, the battalion commander sent a group of penalized soldiers across the river to the enemy, who skillfully disguised themselves at the very edge of the water. He himself unfolded "construction" on his shore: some were hewing logs with axes almost in plain sight, others in the depths of the forest were pounding on tree trunks with infantry shovels. The enemy could not stand it, sent reconnaissance the next night. her kill

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rallied without shots, with knives, and the officer and two soldiers were dragged wet to the headquarters of the 3rd Army.

During the liberation of Rogachev, the native city of Osipov, the battalion commander, on the orders of the commander, led the OSHB behind enemy lines using only paths known to him, organized ambushes and launched daring sabotage on communications. Then even the general was destroyed by fire from an ambush. Alexander Pylytsyn does not exaggerate: I saw in the battalion's report on the results of the battle, prisoners and trophies the column "generals" with a proud one. On August 1, 1944, Colonel Osipov handed over the 8th OSHB to Lieutenant Colonel Baturin Nikolai Nikitovich. With him, the penalty boxers went further west, beyond the borders of their Fatherland. The battalion, which near Stalingrad was supposed to have two GAZ-AA trucks and six convoy horses with three wagons, has already become quite well-equipped. Deputy Head of the Personnel Department of the | th Belorussian Front of the Guards Colonel A.



Evdokimov once demanded to urgently report where the battalion had a passenger Dodge 3/4, 8 trucks and 4 riding horses. Lieutenant Colonel Baturin answered with dignity: the trucks were received in the 106th autobattalion on the basis of the decision of the Military Council of the front, the OShB passenger car was presented by Lieutenant General K.F. Telegin, and there are exactly as many horses as provided for by the state - 49. Why the convoys were replaced by horsemen, the battalion commander delicately kept silent: he began his service in the cavalry, wore a Kubanka in violation of his uniform and was an unsurpassed rider. By the way, from April to November 1943, the light tank "T-60" was in service in the 8th OSHB. Tankers found him shot down somewhere near Sevsk, brought him back to life and used him for reconnaissance. Although they did not like Baturin - he poured reprimands right and left - the battalion successfully solved combat missions even with him. Many of the company and platoon commanders were awarded

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dens, including the orders of the Red Banner, Alexander Nevsky, Bogdan Khmel'nitsky Sh degree.

Beyond the Oder, the OSHB was located only in the villages: Steinwehr, Neuenhagen, Ruhlsdorf, Levenberg, Wusterhausen, and more or less settled in Brüchenmühle. By order of the commander of the 1st Belorussian Front, Marshal of the Soviet Union G.K. Zhukov No. 0394 dated May 7, 1945, the entire variable composition of the 8th OSHB was restored to the rights of officers and military ranks. Yesterday's penalty boxers dispersed in groups to their units, which were not easy to find. And until July 20, 1945, those who were at fault arrived in the battalion, whom the end of the war found on their way to the OShB. Having prepared the relevant documents, they were immediately expelled from the battalion in accordance with the order of the front commander No. 0467 dated June 10, 1945. The last order for the 8th separate penal battalion of the Group of Soviet Occupation Forces in Germany was dated August 7, 1945 Here it is: "I, the commander of the OShB, Lieutenant Colonel Baturin Nikolai Nikitovich, from this date I am leaving at the disposal of the OK GSOVG for further service, and for the transfer to the archive of affairs I leave the chief of staff, Major Kiselev Filip Andreevich. Reason: attitude OK GSOVG No. 02255 dated July 27, 1945 " Philip Andreevich Kiselev handed over the files to the archive. After the war, he became a general and for many years worked in the Main Personnel Department as deputy head of one of the departments. He, like most of those mentioned in these notes, is no longer among the living.

May there never be penal battalions in our army again. Knowing the truth about them is not superfluous. The past teaches a lot from a distance. And no blood.

A red star. June 15, 16, 17, 2006

## Moroz A. V. PENALTY COMPANY

Recall that the order of the USSR NPO No. 227 dated July 28, 1942 provided for the formation of two types of penal units: penal battalions (800 people each), where medium and senior commanders and corresponding political workers were sent who were guilty of violating discipline due to cowardice or instability, and penal companies (from 150 to 200 people in each), where ordinary soldiers and junior commanders were sent for the same offenses. When sent to the penal battalion, officers, and to the penal company - sergeants were subject to demotion to the rank and file.

Penal battalions were units of front-line subordination (from one to three in the front), and penal companies were army units (from five to ten per army, depending on the situation).

The formation of penal battalions and companies began already in August 1942. On September 28 of this year, by order of the NPO of the USSR No. 298, signed by G.K. Zhukov,

. provisions for a penal battalion and a penal company were announced.

What is envisaged by the Regulations on the Penal Company? It is said that the organization, strength and combat composition, as well as salaries for the maintenance of the permanent composition of the penal companies are determined by a special staff. penalty box

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`Penal company

the company, by order of the Military Council of the Army, is attached to the rifle regiment or division, brigade, on the site of which it was placed.

Strong-willed and most distinguished commanders and political workers were sent to the permanent composition of companies by order of the army. The commander and military commissar of a penal company in relation to the penalized used the power of the commander and military commissar of the division. The term of service in ranks for officers of the penal company was halved, and the salary was doubled. When assigning a pension, a month of service in a penal company was counted as six.

Never in the entire war - we emphasize this from the very beginning - was there and could not be a case that a penal company or a platoon in its composition was commanded by a penal.

Penal boxes were called variable composition of the company, and from them the Regulations allowed to appoint only squad commanders with the rank of corporal, junior sergeant and sergeant.

Penal units are not our invention, as rightly stated in the order of the NPO of the USSR No. 227. The Germans threw penal formations into battle already in the first weeks of the war on the Soviet German front. Moreover, the period of stay in the battalion was not set in advance for the penalized, although the possibility of rehabilitation was also not ruled out. In the diary of the notorious Franz Halder, penal units are already mentioned on July 9, 1941. On that day, the head of the organizational department of the OKH, Major General Walter Buhle, called the organization of penal units a very good and useful idea. In 1941, the Germans used some penal battalions in battles in the East, others in mine clearance work in the West. In September 1941, when the 16th German Army in the area of Lake Ladoga along

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failed and the 8th Panzer Division was thrown back with losses, the Nazis sent everything they had to the battle, and in the most dangerous sector - a penal battalion. This is also mentioned in Halder's diary.

In war, apparently, life itself suggests the idea of penal formations. Is it worth removing a person who has committed a criminal or military crime from combat formations in order to send him with a sentence to safer places? In a penal company, one can expiate one's guilt without a criminal record, without loss of honour.

So, on August 8, 1942, even before receiving the order with the position, they began to form a penal company in the 57th Army. At first, only one - the 1st. By order of the Military Council No. 0398, Lieutenant P.P. was appointed its commander. Nazarevich, who had six months of experience Participating in battles. Junior Lieutenant N.M. was appointed his deputy. Baturin, also tested by fire. The staff of the company, in addition to the commander and his deputy, provided for the positions of three platoon commanders, three of their deputies for the combat unit, head of records management - treasurer and paramedic in officer rank. |

An impressive composition of political workers was also envisaged: a military commissar, a company agitator and three platoon political instructors. Political workers began to enter the 1st separate penal company in October, after the restoration of unity of command in the Red Army - no longer as military commissars and political instructors, but as deputy commanders for political affairs. First political officer of the company Grigory

Bocharov still had the old rank of political instructor (he soon left for the 90th separate tank brigade as a captain). All deputy platoon commanders for political affairs were lieutenants: A. Stepin, I. Koryukin, and N. Safronov. Lieutenant M. Miloradovich was appointed company agitator.

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penal company

Since October 25, 1942, Vasily Klyuyev became the paramedic of the company, who for some reason had to wear the already canceled title of military paramedic for a long time.

As you can see, the permanent composition of the company included 15 officers. The sixteenth was seconded, although he was in it on all types of allowances. At first he was a commissioner of the special department of the NKVD, and in April 1943 he was a detective of the counterintelligence department of Smersh, a structure of the People's Commissariat of Defense.

During the war, the officers of the penal company were reduced to 8 people. Of the political workers, only one agitator remained.

In the 1st penal company, as in any other, there was also a small permanent core of ordinary and junior commanders: a foreman of the company, a clerk - captain, a medical instructor and three platoon orderlies, a GAZ-AA truck driver, two grooms (driving) and two cooks. They were more like numbers than combat personnel, although they carried the wounded from the battlefield and delivered food and ammunition to the positions. If all the officers of the company were young, without pre-war experience of command service, then the Red Army men and junior commanders of the permanent staff represented the older age of the mobilized. For example, the foreman of the company Dmitry Evdokimov, holder of the Order of the Red Star, celebrated his 50th birthday during the war.

But let's go back to 1942. Since August 6, the 57th Army has been waging heavy defensive battles as part of the South Eastern (Stalingrad since September 30) Front, frustrating enemy attempts to break through to Stalingrad from the south. The 1st penal company, not yet fully staffed by permanent staff, received its baptism of fire on October 9, 1942 at 23.00. The commander of the 15th Guards Rifle Division, who had at his disposal the company, ordered it to

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mortar preparation to shoot down the enemy's combat guard posts at a height of 146.0, to the left of it - in three trenches and go to the pond, on the southern outskirts of which the hangar was located, and there with all-round defense to hold the line until the main forces approached.

In companies, combat orders are given verbally. But Lieutenant P. Nazarevich issued his first order to fight in writing. The company was divided into three assault groups. However, we will not delve into tactics. Note that the penal company solved its first combat mission. In that battle, two penalty boxers were killed: the squad leader, sergeant V.S. Fedyakin and Red Army soldier Ya.T. Tanochka. The platoon commander, who led the assault group aimed at height 146.0, Lieutenant Nikolai Kharin, also died a hero's death. The dead were buried at the same hangar, which before the battle was listed as belonging to the enemy. 15 people were wounded in the first battle.

The company, meanwhile, was replenished with both penalized and permanent staff. Lieutenant Nazarevich did not receive everyone. Sent to the company by the medical instructor of the Red Army soldier Maria Grechanaya, he returned to the 44th Guards Rifle Regiment as not suitable for the staff of the penal company. Later, already in 1943, another company commander did not accept Lieutenant A.A. Vinogradov, and at the end of the war, the girl-cook was returned to the army reserve regiment without explanation, preferring the former male chefs. But in the penal battalions, both in permanent and in variable composition, women still met.

At the defensive stage of the Battle of Stalingrad, the company suffered relatively small losses. Apparently, there is an explanation for this: they rarely put penalty boxes on the defensive, they reserved them for active actions - offensive, reconnaissance in force. | November 1942, the first group was sent from the 1st penal to regular units

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penal company

of seven people who had completely served the term prescribed by the order in the company. Moreover, N.F. Vinogradov and E.N. Konovalov were reinstated in the ranks of sergeants.

In the meantime, another penal company, the 2nd Separate, was formed in the 57th Army. The companies, one might say, kept in touch with each other: sometimes they exchanged, replenishing each other before the battle, with a variable composition, they helped out during redeployment by horse-drawn transport.

On November 19, 1942, our troops launched a counteroffensive near Stalingrad. But the 57th Army at that time participated in the encirclement and blocking of enemy troops in Stalingrad itself, and their liquidation began later. The 1st penal company, located in the area of Tatyanka, Shpalzavod, did not have a variable composition for some time. On November 21, she was assigned a new number - the 60th (the 2nd penal company of the 57th Army became the 61st) and was brought to combat strength in a short time. Only from the 54th penal company, stationed in Tashkent far from the front, 156 people were sent at once, from Ufa - 80, from the army transit point - 20. The composition of the company even went beyond its usual numerical limits.

The battles that broke out in the ruins of Stalingrad were bloody. On January 10, 1943, platoon commanders lieutenants A.N. were killed in assault attacks. Shipunov, P.A. Zhuk, A.G. Bezuglovich, the company commander senior lieutenant P.P. was injured. Nazarevich, company agitator Lieutenant M.N. Miloradovich, deputy platoon commanders junior lieutenants Z3.A. Ti moshenko, I.A. Leontiev. On the same day, 122 fines died or were injured, atoning for their guilt with life and blood.

Senior Lieutenant Nazarevich, evacuated through the divisional medical battalion to the hospital, on coman

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his post was replaced by his deputy for political affairs, Lieutenant Ivan Smelov. He served as commander until the end of the fighting in the city. Very heavy fighting — from January 23 to January 30, 1943, the company lost another 139 people wounded and killed.

Penal companies were almost never located in populated areas. If the place of deployment is indicated in the order for the company, it means that there are no penalties in it, only a permanent staff. At the end of the Battle of Stalingrad, the 60th penal was already stationed in the village with only a permanent staff. Tatyanka, then to the village of Zaplavnoye.

But the order dated May 20, 1943 is already tied to Rzhev, which is quite remote from Stalingrad. The fact is that in February 1943 the 57th Army was withdrawn to the reserve of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command, its troops were transferred to other armies, and the field administration was renamed the field administration of the 68th Army. A part of this management was the permanent staff of the 60th penal company transferred to Rzhev, up to the cooks. Here Lieutenant I.T. Smelov returned to his duties as deputy company commander for political affairs, and Lieutenant Mikhail Dyakov became commander.

Maybe; some of the readers listing so many names will seem superfluous. But we will not spare a newspaper line for them. After all, those who commanded penal units constantly served in their composition, during the days of the war, and even after the Victory, for well-known reasons, they were rarely mentioned in the press.

Meanwhile, they consciously and without any fault shared with the penalized all the dangers and risks of a special situation. Furthermore. The prisoner, having received even a slight wound, went as atoned for his guilt in the former, calmer part. This did not concern the officers of the permanent composition: having recovered from the wound, they returned to the company to their former position and, it happened, died after a month or two.

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This is exactly what happened to the platoon commanders, Lieutenants Mikhail Komkov, Ivan Danilin, Senior Lieutenant Semyon Ivanushkin. Their fate is bitter: wounded - hospital - return to the company and death in the next battle.

In Rzhev, the 60th separate penal company did not have a variable composition from May 20 to June 14, 1943. On June 15, the first 5 penal soldiers arrived from the army transit point. Then, in small groups, the offenders from the 159th, 192nd, and 199th rifle divisions, from the 3rd assault engineer-sapper brigade, the 968th separate communications battalion, and other parts of the army began to arrive.

On August 26, 1943, senior lieutenant M. Dyakov was replaced as commander of the 60th penal company by senior lieutenant Denis Belim. The company was used for combat on the last day of the Yelninsko-Dorogobuzh offensive operation on September 7th. Advancing in the area of the villages of Suglitsa and Yushkovo, the company lost 42 people killed and wounded. The senior lieutenant Belim, who had just been appointed commander, also fell in battle. 10 people who showed special courage with Yushkov were sent ahead of schedule to the 159th rifle division, and two to the 3rd engineering sapper brigade.

On September 7, on the day of that memorable battle, Captain Ivan Dedyayev took over the company. Already under his command, the penalty box liberated the village of Bobrovo from the enemy, losing another 28 killed and 78 wounded.

In early November 1943, the 68th Army was disbanded, and the 60th penal company was transferred to the 5th Army, which had become famous during the defense of Moscow. While maintaining the former permanent core, it was reorganized into the 128th separate army penal company.

Before the new, 1943, year, December 31, Captain I.M. Dedyayev handed over the company to Senior Lieutenant Alek

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sandra queen. On New Year's Eve, a company commander who barely had time to look around was in for trouble: the post of the barrier detachment of the 5th Army, which the penalized officers encountered for the first time, detained 9 Red Army soldiers of variable composition outside the company's location and, as he always did, escorted them for trial to the 203rd Army reserve infantry regiment.

In almost all films dedicated to the penalized, the scriptwriters and directors at some stage bring them together with the detachment. Moreover, the detachment guards show off almost in dress uniform, in caps of another department with a blue top, with brand new PPSH and, of course, with an easel machine gun. They defiantly take a position behind the backs of the penalty box in order to prevent their retreat with fire in case of an unsuccessful attack. This is fiction.

Even before the order of the NPO USSR No. 227, in the first months of the war, commanders and political workers, on their own initiative, began to create units called upon and capable of stopping the retreating, reasoning, again rally into a team, an organized and managed group. They, these units, narrowly

enacted back in September 1941 by the Supreme Command, and became the prototype of the barrage detachments.

Later, when in the armies, by order No. 227, detachments were formed as separate military units subordinate to the Military Council, subdivisions similar in tasks in divisions began to be called barrage battalions. Depending on the situation on the fronts, they were either abolished or revived. If the penal company transferred to the division, trembling in battle, could collide with some kind of barrier during the retreat, then it was with this battalion. No one had blue caps in it and no one

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wore. The same earflaps, quilted jackets, the same caps as the penalty box. ,

Not a single Red Army soldier of the 1st, 60th, 128th penal companies died from their own fire. And no one ever shot over his head for warning. The guards, as representatives of the intra-army structure, were themselves pretty burned by fire and knew: anything happens in battle, a person is a person, and in the face of mortal danger it is important to support him with an example of composure and stamina. Losses in detachments of any affiliation were also serious.

On January 10, 1944, a little more than a week after being appointed company commander, Senior Lieutenant Korolev and platoon commander Lieutenant A.Kh. Tetyanyk were wounded in battle. Together with them, 93 penalty boxers were injured, 35 died.

Already in a row, the company commander, Lieutenant Alexander Mironov, was wounded two weeks later. In the February battles near Gzhatsk, from the 4th to the 10th, the 128th penal company lost almost all of its variable composition: 54 people were killed, 193 were wounded in the medical battalions and the hospital. In those days, the company was received by Senior Lieutenant Vasily Bussov. Bussov, who was wounded on February 28, was replaced by senior lieutenant I.Ya. Korneev. Having been wounded on March 20, he ceded his command post to Senior Lieutenant V.A. Ageev. Ageev was taken to the medical battalion of the division on April 10. On the same day, the company was headed by Senior Lieutenant K.P. Solovyov...

Just a list of names. But doesn't the tension of the battles feel behind him? Doesn't it give rise to thoughts that the most difficult and most dangerous tasks were really entrusted to the penitentiaries, as prescribed by the order of the NGO of the USSR No. 227?

Before the Smolensk offensive operation, the personnel department of the army recalled Senior Lieutenant Kons

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Solovyov's tantina at his disposal. Captain Ivan Mateta took over the 128th penal company. Under his command, the penitentiaries fought near the villages of Podnivye, Starina, and Obukhovo. Losses were relatively small. But already in Lithuania, in the Kaunas region, where the company, among many other units, broke through the enemy's defenses, success was paid in full with blood: 29 dead and 54 wounded. Five days later, in the battle for Zapashki and Servidy, the company suffered new losses: 20 killed, 24 wounded.

On August 18, 1944, the 128th penal company, with a certain solemnity, sent 97 Red Army soldiers and sergeants who had served their sentences to the 346th rifle regiment at once. And received from the 203rd AZSP (Army Reserve Rifle Regiment. — Comp.) exactly 100 new penalty boxers already without celebrations.

Perhaps it's time to say: who are they, the penalty box? Those who showed cowardice and instability in battle already made up a minority of them. By order of the NPO USSR No. 413 dated August 21, 1943, the commanders of the regiments of the active army and the commanders of divisions in military districts and on inactive fronts were allowed by their authority to send arbitrators, deserters, those who showed incompetence, squandered property, grossly violated guard duty rules.

For three months, for example, a cadet of the military aviation school of pilots, who had been studying for more than a year and all this time robbing the unit and colleagues, landed in the 128th penal company. The order of the head of the school says that, as shown by the inquiry, he stole watches, insulated jackets, overcoats, tunics, sold all this, and lost the proceeds at cards.

An inexhaustible stream to the penal companies

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those who, during the retreat of the Red Army in the first weeks and months of the war, deserted and settled in the territory occupied by the enemy, and also partially liberated from enemy captivity.

If a straggler from the army, under dubious circumstances, did not attempt to get out to his own people, but did not cooperate with the occupying authorities, then he was sent to a penal company for one month. Those who served as elders under the Germans, as policemen, received two months. And those who served in the German army or in the so-called Russian Liberation Army (ROA), the traitor Vlasov had three. Their fate was determined in the army reserve rifle regiment in accordance with the order of the NPO.

There was a case when, after a corresponding check, 94 former Vlasovites were immediately sent to the 128th separate penal company. They won back, like all other categories of those who have been fined: someone atoned for the guilt with blood, someone with death, and who was lucky with the full serving of the term. I have not met anyone released early from such a contingent.

It was extremely rare for convicts from places of deprivation of liberty to get into penal companies. The 128th company received such people only once - 17 people sent through the Far Eastern military registration and enlistment offices. This should not be surprising. Back in 1941, by decrees of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR of July 12, August 10 and November 24, more than 750 thousand people who had committed minor crimes before the war and were fit for service were sent from places of deprivation of liberty to the troops. At the beginning of 1942, another 157 thousand people were released for the army. All of them fought as part of ordinary units, there were no penalties yet. And if some of these people, as the archives convince us, later ended up in penal wards, it was already for deeds at the front.

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Those who committed serious crimes, including the so-called counter-revolutionary ones, were forbidden to be sent to the army. It was impossible to apply to them the suspension of execution of the sentence provided for by the Criminal Code of the RSFSR of 1926 until the end of hostilities.

Apparently, in isolated cases, as a result of some judicial errors, individuals convicted of banditry, robbery, robbery, recidivist thieves nevertheless ended up in penal companies. How else can one explain order No. 004/0073/006/23 dated January 26, 1944, signed by the Deputy Commissar of Defense of the USSR A.M. Vasilevsky, People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of the USSR L.P. Beria, People's Commissar of Justice of the USSR N.M. Rychkov and USSR Prosecutor K.P. Gorshenin, who

obliged the judiciary and the formation and staffing of troops such cases

exclude completely.

None of the convicts, of course, could be sent to the penal unit on a voluntary basis.

Of course, some of the Red Army soldiers who ended up in the penalty box evoke sympathy. In the 128th penal company, for example, an elderly soldier was serving a monthly sentence, during whose duty a pair of convoy horses disappeared. I overlooked...

In the very dynamic life of the company, there were incidents that affected the fate of people. In the 203rd AZSP, the Red Army soldier Babaev Kurbandurly was included in one of the groups of penalty boxers, for whom there were no misdemeanors. We sent a follow-up order with an explanation. The company commander decided to leave the soldier in the company, transferring him to the permanent staff for the vacant position of an orderly.

Somehow they made a mistake in the company itself, submitting to the Military Council of the Army for early release one of the penalized as wounded. And in the regiment, the authorized ROC Smersh did not detect this injury

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roared and through the commander returned the fighter to serve his sentence to the end.

Relations in the penal company were regulated by the general military regulations of the Red Army. Ordinary fighters of variable composition turned to their immediate superior - the squad leader, the same penal, with the word "comrade" and, in case of negligence, could receive a penalty from him. Comrade, and not "citizen", as shown in one of the TV films, they called the commander - an officer.

The commander of the penal company used the disciplinary rights of the division commander in full. Sometimes, he punished the guilty platoons with house arrest. Don't forget to reward your efforts. For example, in connection with his fiftieth birthday, in the midst of the fighting, the foreman of the company was granted leave with a trip to his homeland for a period of 45 days. With excitement, the May Day orders for the company are received, in which the zeal of many penalty boxers was noted with gratitude.

The penal company, as part of the army subordination, was sometimes better than the linear companies equipped with weapons, provided with food and fodder.

The 128th penal company ended the war with Nazi Germany in East Prussia. The fighting there was fierce. In one of them, behind the town of Plissen, a company commander, Major Ramazan Temirov, a native of the North Ossetian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, and a company agitator, Captain Pavel Smirnyagin, the only company political worker called up from Novosibirsk region. They were buried with military honors southwest of Plissen at the local cemetery.

The company suffered its last losses in the Baltic on April 14, 1945 near the village of Kobnaiten: 8 dead and 56 wounded.

And then the 5th Army under the command of N.I. Kry

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lov, the future marshal of the Soviet Union, and in its composition the 128th penal company went to the Far East to beat the Japanese. The company did not suffer any losses in the Harbin-Girinsky offensive operation, except for a trophy gelding named Orlik, who fell ill on the way and was left at the Minino station of the Krasnoyarsk railway. In Primorye, the penal company was located in the vicinity of the regional center of Chernigovka, then - in Grodekovo, Spassky district. There, the company was commanded by Senior Lieutenant S.A. Kudryavtsev, then senior lieutenant V.I. Brykov.

The fact that in the penal units the dashing, unpredictable in behavior, and prone to excesses gathered people is evidenced by the following fact: already a few fighters-variables, completing their stay in the 128th penal company, managed to commit some kind of something brawl in Grbdekov. Four were detained by the local police and put under investigation. Senior Lieutenant V. Brykov was forced by one of his last orders to exclude them from the lists of the company and remove them from all types of allowances. In this regard, you think: if the guilt of the defendants is established, it will not be possible to atone for it in a front-line manner, without a criminal record. Penal companies as a redemptive institution were fading into history.

Vasily Ivanovich Brykov was destined, on the basis of the directive of the headquarters of the 5th Army, No. 0238 of October 28, 1945, to disband the company. The last to leave it were the senior lieutenant of the medical service Vasily Klyuev, already mentioned in these notes (only he, a paramedic, a veteran of the unit, by that time had the right to call himself a Stalingrader) and the head of production - the treasurer senior lieutenant of the commissariat service Philip Nesterov. The archive and the company seal from Nesterov, by the way, were accepted only

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after he reimbursed the cost of somehow lost fodder containers from his own pocket.

If we talk about serious things, then from August 1942 to October 1945, 3348 penalized soldiers passed through the 1st, 60th, 128th penal company, the documentation of which is one archival file. 796 of them died for their Motherland, 1929 were injured, 117 were released after the deadline set by the order, and 457 were released ahead of schedule. And only a very small part, about 1 percent, lagged behind on the marches, deserted, was taken prisoner by the enemy, went missing.

In total, 62 officers served in the company at different times. Of these, 16 died, 17 were injured (three of the wounded were later killed). Many have received awards. The Order of the Patriotic War [degrees] were awarded to Captain I. Mateta, Senior Lieutenant L. Lyubchenko, Lieutenants T. Boldyrev, A. Lobov, A. Makariev; World War II degree - senior lieutenant I. Danilin, lieutenants A. Makariev, I. Morozov; Red Star - Senior Lieutenant I. Danilin, Captain I. Lev, Senior Lieutenants L. Lyubchenko, P. Ananiev (detector of the ROC Smersh at the 128th company), Junior Lieutenant I. Morozov, Captains R. Temirov and P. Smirnyagin. As you can see, some officers were awarded orders more than once.

Orders of the Red Star, Glory of the III degree, medals "For Courage" and "For Military Merit" were also awarded to 43 Red Army soldiers and sergeants of variable composition. The penalty boxers were not rewarded very generously, but they were rewarded nonetheless.

Among the few who returned to their native regiment from the penal company with an award were the Red Army soldiers Petr Zemkin (or Zenkin), Viktor Rogulenko, Artem Tadjumanov, Mikhail Galuza, Ilya Dranishev. posthumous

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but the machine gunner Pyotr Logvanov and the submachine gunner Vasily Serdyuk were awarded orders.

And the last. Penal companies were separate military units with all their attributes, separate military farms. Thanks to this status, all of them were included in the List No. 33 of rifle units and subunits (individual battalions, companies and detachments) of the active army, compiled by the General Staff after the war. The company in question is listed in it many times: as the 1st separate penal company of the 57th Army (1942), as the 60th separate penal company (1942-1943) and, finally, as the 128th separate penal company of the 5th army (1943-1945). In fact, it was one and the same company. Only the number, seal, subordination and field address changed.

This is how the story based on documents about one of the penal companies developed, which was not much different from other penal units created in accordance with the order of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR No. 227 "Not a step back", memorable to all front-line soldiers. It may not be interesting for every reader, but I think it will allow anyone to mentally compare what they read with what they were offered to take on faith in television series that caused discussions in society.

A red star. 2007. April 11-17.

Babchenko A.A. FRAUD FROM SHAFTBAT

Penal battalion. Penal battalion. Even its sound is a terrible word. They were always thrown into the thick of things... Now there are very few of them left. And everyone has their own memories of their penal battalion. Someone has a trophy bayonet, someone has a certificate of release, someone has a terrible bluish scar under the shoulder blade. Ivan Petrovich Gorin has an officer's overcoat, which, contrary to the charter, he sewed to order from a Polish tailor in Poznan and for which he spent several times on the "lip". But he never exchanged it, lucky, perfectly fitted, for a simple soldier's one.

No, the surname of the Fraudster was, of course, wrong. Well, what kind of Gorin is he? Rather, Schastlivtsev. How many times he had the opportunity to die, but every time he was lucky. To survive the famine of the 1930s, the Stalinist camps and the penal company - this requires a special talent. Luck talent. And he certainly had it.

However, he also had another talent. The swindler knew how to draw. When he didn't have to think about grub, he would sit down somewhere with a piece of paper and spend hours drawing portraits of his orphanage's holsters. Or went into the field and painted landscapes. At such moments he forgot about everything, and nothing disturbed him anymore. And the clique

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he had something at first he had - an artist. He became a swindler later on.

It was this talent in him that the Teacher once noticed. He walked up to the market where the Fraudster was trying to push his reproductions from Shishkin's "bears" (for some reason they were especially good), stood and looked. Yes, I took it to my studio.

This turning point was perhaps the greatest stroke of luck in his life. If it weren't for the Teacher, the Rascal would someday have given up on art, would have got in touch with the criminals once and for all, and would have perished in the camps. But the Teacher pulled him out of the pack, accepted him as a son. Began to teach. He showed how to apply paint, emphasize the play of light and shadow, so that a flat face would suddenly come to life on the canvas, so that depth and content would come out in it, so that the character would become understandable to people. The fraudster tried. Worked like hell.

And suddenly formed like a family with a swindler. Together with the Teacher - no longer a tramp, in the family, with someone.

For some time they lived together. They painted icons, reproductions - all the same "Bears" and "Hunters". That's what they fed. People bought, and it began to seem to the Fraudster that he settled down in life completely. Found my place.

And then suddenly the war started. The teachers were taken to the front. He returned six months later with a shot through light and consumptive blush. Even before the war he did not differ in special health, but here he became quite a goner. He developed hemoptysis, which did not go away with hunger. It was then that the Fraudster began to forge bread cards and change them for food. For bread. If you managed to earn half a loaf a day - good.

It was with these cards in the winter of 1944 that they tied him up. How they tracked it down is unclear. Aunts at the market already

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Fraudster from the penal battalion

no matter how they twisted his cards in their hands, almost tried them by the teeth, no one ever doubted the authenticity. But here, please, two came in the evening, knocked on the window: "Let's go." And let's go. Simply, casually, as usual, like on a walk — two NKVD officers and he is in the middle. Like a kid with older brothers...

The Fraudster did not stay in jail for long. Quick investigation, trial, sentence. Soldered him for these cards, taking into account the past five years of camps, which remained from the reckless youth of the orphanage. Lucky again. A criminal article, five years in those days was not a term at all (they could easily have been put up against the wall according to the law of war), and most importantly, they were not listed as enemies of the people.

"In the Kovrov transfer, I asked to replace my term with a penal battalion," Ivan Petrovich recalls now. "They didn't give political weapons—they didn't trust me, but I went for fraud, and they replaced me. And from Vladimir they were taken to the forests under the city. There, behind a row of three-thorny wires, there was a reserve penal battalion. Pretty big. And out of my entire penal biography, this spare penal battalion near Vladimir was the most terrible ...

It was 1944, the war was drawing to a close, and he still had time to pay off his criminal record. And he began to ask for the front.

"They didn't want to let me go for a long time, then I already began to insist – in fact, this is how the war will end, and I will have to go to these camps and sit there for five years?! Why, you ask, why? In the end, they let me go. I did not believe that they would kill me. And my excuse was very simple - I was still just a boy then. I'm sorry, I haven't tried a single girl yet. That's why I shouldn't have been killed. Hurt only. But it's bound to hurt.

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In the spring of 1944, convicted Gorin was enrolled in the staff of the 62nd separate penal company and left for the front to atone for his guilt with blood ...

The entire penal war was reduced for the Rascal to a single attack, when his company entered the gap, into the death sack, with the task of expanding the corridor between the two German units.

We were brought to the front line. It was five o'clock in the morning. For the first time fed to the full. The rvanina was replaced with new sheepskin coats, they were given a full duffel bag of cartridges. They even poured vodka. They just didn't give me weapons. Artillery and aviation were not allowed to be used. The order was - to take manpower. They wanted to keep the underground factories, of which the Germans built a lot there.

Before the attack itself, they armed the "manpower" thrown onto the fortified area with carbines. Neither machine guns nor machine guns were given. And forward. Without fire support, without artillery preparation, with a bang.

We have entered this breakthrough. Well, I will report to you... You are being poured with fire from the right, and from the left, and from above, and from the front. And back - they stop their own, a detachment. I am often asked - were you afraid of them? They didn't think. They just didn't think. Because they weren't going to back down. And I was always surprised: fines, criminals - and at least someone ran away! It wasn't. Did not have.

In two hours, the company covered a distance "quite large, somewhere between a hundred and two hundred meters." Then the fire intensified to impossibility. The Germans defended the fortified area together with the Vlasovites, and they were not allowed to surrender, and they fought to the last.

Death, which seemed the most logical conclusion to that disastrous attack, bypassed the Fraudster side, leaving among those who survived. Those who redeemed. One of ten. Thirty-two out of three hundred and sixty. All are wounded. Not injured - no one. Roth was no more.

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Fraudster from the penal battalion

In the rear, the Fraudster had to get himself. I reached the only surviving house, which stood right in the middle of the field. It turned out to be a medical battalion.

- I go in, but there is no place in the house anymore. And the dead are all over the place. Well, they put me among the dead, where to go, then.

There were only a few people alive in this house - a group of gunners who drank trophy alcohol in the basement. It was they who called the wounded boy to their place.

- Went down to them. Got drunk and I fell asleep. In the morning, as soon as dawn began, the typical sound of a shell at the end. And-and! And breaks through the wall of this house, bursts on the floor. Scattered all the wounded, killed, maimed. And during the night many children crawled out on this house. I come out of the basement - and in the house there is minced meat. The gunners remained intact. And I'm with them. Lucky back.

How he got to the field hospital, Ivan Petrovich no longer remembers. By that time, he was already dying. From loss of blood, he constantly fell into unconsciousness. The surgeon pulled out his card first, shouted out his name. He heard, wheezed: "I-I-I"... If he had been at least second in line for the operation, he would not have made it.

Gorin atoned for his guilt before the Motherland twice. Literally a few seconds after a fragment entered the body above the left shoulder blade, the arm was torn apart by a bullet. The arm has grown together, and the pierced lung could breathe freely only in the country, where there is no urban smog.

We sat on the terrace. On his knees Ivan Petrovich had an old, burnt, holey overcoat, which he patched up with khaki thread. On the table is a pipe. Despite the injury, he never gave up smoking.

"The sky, look how beautiful it is," said Ivan Petrovich. Then he continued: "My accomplice, Kolka Rogozin, with whom we went on the case together and ended up in the penal battalion together, died in the very first seconds.

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Babchenko A.A.

fight. As soon as they took the first step, the bullet hit him right in the middle of the forehead. He didn't even feel anything. And now I regret that I know where he died, how he died, but did not tell his mother ...

When I was leaving, Ivan Petrovich's son-in-law stopped me:

"He didn't tell you anything about his second injury?" He talked about it only once. The second bullet that hit him in the arm came from behind, from behind. He's sure the guys shot him on purpose. They believed that Rascal must have survived. Because he was not like everyone else. I read poetry to them, Shakespeare. The boy was clean and bright. The guys knew that he wanted to become an artist.

He became more than just an artist. He lived his life as if he was paying off a loan to his guys penalized for that shot. Honored Art Worker, Candidate of Art Criticism Ivan Petrovich Gorin managed to create a unique institute — the Research Institute of Restoration, whose permanent leader he worked until 1993. He restored the Borodino panorama and the famous Danae. Worked in Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Belarus, Cambodia, Vietnam. The latest work is the restoration of the monument to Minin and Pozharsky. His paintings are exhibited in the Russian Museum, the Dresden Gallery, the Museum of Modern Art in Amsterdam, private collections in France, Germany, England, the USA, Mexico, and India.

He was unmercenary and a freethinker. He hid the Solzhenitsyn Foundation. He earned 20 reprimands on the party line for his connections with dissidents, but he was never removed from his post - there was simply no one to replace him...

New Newspaper. 2005. September 26.

Shatilov V.M. HEIGHT

... Regiment N.N. Balynin (469th Rifle Regiment - Comp.) occupied a site along the northern part of the lake, where the Uchenoe narrowed, turning into a short and narrow channel connecting it with Lake Khvoino. On the other side, along the channel, there was a rather steep height, overgrown with shrubs and sparse forests, with a mark of 228.4. Dominating the surrounding area, it was of great tactical value.

"Our people call it Zaozernaya height, people don't like to leave conspicuous places nameless," said Balynin.  
- She's well built. You see, three rows of trenches.

We were at a battalion observation post, well camouflaged, with a wide view. Leaning against the stereo tube, I looked through the wooded area, heavily fortified by the enemy.

slope.

"The view from there is about ten kilometers in our direction," continued Balynin. — The Germans, they say, call it "the height of the Eyes." They feel very comfortable here. Apparently, they consider their position impregnable. They show no activity. Yesterday for the whole day not a single shot did not do.

I looked at the hill and could not take my eyes off it: what a good position! Capture  
her - and

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Shatilov V.M.

we will control the area extending far to the west. But is it feasible? And if feasible, at what cost? Will it be a pyrrhic victory? The only thing we could rely on was surprise. In a word, it was necessary to think hard about all this. And not alone, but together. Immediately I turned to the regimental commander:

- Comrade Balynin, I ask you to think about the possibility of capturing Zaozernaya. Work with Korotenko. After two days report to me your thoughts.

He noted in his notebook: "Tonight, give the task to the head of intelligence of the division, Major Korotenko, so that he prepares the necessary intelligence."

The following days, iya, and staff officers were in the regiments. From morning till evening, commands were heard in the copses, shots and grenade explosions rang out. The units were trained in all types of combat. Special trainings were held to overcome the fording of shallow water obstacles. With the onset of darkness, combat operations were practiced at night. Classes were planned so as not to overwork the fighters, to give them enough sleep and rest.

Two days later, Balynin reported to me his plan for the assault on Zaozernaya. On the third day, I ordered the officers of the division headquarters, the commanders of regiments and divisions to gather in order to assess the possibilities of capturing the hill on the ground. In the early morning of June 12, in small groups, we moved along an overgrown, barely noticeable path. The sun's rays scarcely penetrated the foliage that closed over us. Open areas were bypassed or ran across, hiding behind bushes. Apparently, the disguise was quite thorough. In any case, the enemy did not notice our movement.

The path led us to a trench. According to her we are good

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We climbed to the shelter, from which the eastern slopes of Zaozernaya were clearly visible. The binoculars began to examine the height.

When everyone pulled themselves up, I said to Korotenko:

- Report.

"From this point you can see the front line of the enemy from the canal to the edge of the forest," began Ivan Konstantinovich. - The defense here was created within two to two and a half months. Now it consists of two positions, and each position consists of two or three tranches. The trenches are interconnected by communication passages. The moves stretch for the height, to the rear. In some places there are wire fences. There are minefields over there. The approaches to the height in front of the channel are especially heavily fortified. - Opening the planchette and looking at the map, Korotenko continued: - The width of the water barrier is from twenty-five to fifty meters. Depth - one and a half to two meters. All this space is covered by flank machine-gun fire from the village of Khvoino. In addition, the approaches to the water were targeted by artillery. On the western slopes, according to our intelligence, up to two artillery divisions are concentrated. They occupy the heights of the fifteenth Latvian SS division. From it, the fascists look over the disposition of our troops eight kilometers in depth, and in some places twelve kilometers. This area is the most peaceful. The enemy here did not even undertake reconnaissance sorties. Apparently, he believes that any action is impossible on our part. However, at night the trenches are fully occupied. Strong military guards and secrets are posted in front of them. At 07:00, the subunits are taken to rest in shelters along the western slope. Only the machine gunners and observers on duty remain in place. From eight to nine - breakfast. Then rest. Some of the soldiers are on fire. Me

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waiting for twelve and thirteen - a change of observers and machine gunners. At fifteen, lunch. The most convenient time for an attack is nine in the morning," Korotenko finished his report.

It was clear that, in principle, an attack on the heights could be successful if well prepared for it and carried out suddenly.

After exchanging opinions, we decided that a rifle battalion, a tank platoon, a battery of escort guns, and a battery to cover the crossing were enough to master the height. Two artillery battalions and a Katyusha battalion were required for support. Two more rifle battalions should have been allocated to consolidate on the heights and build on success.

I distributed the time for preparation as follows: two days - for reconnaissance and study of the enemy; three - for training units and one - for washing in the bath and rest. He ordered the trenches to be brought closer to the shore so that the attack would be faster and more unexpected for the enemy. On the night before the battle, rifle companies, heavy machine guns and direct fire guns were to take up position in the first and second trenches.

The start of the movement of rifle companies was scheduled for 9 o'clock, simultaneously with the opening of artillery fire. All that remained was to choose a day. We focused on June 22. Oriented - because all our intentions could gain strength only after their approval by the command of the corps. After all, what we started went beyond the scope of a petty skirmish and should not have run counter to broader and more general plans.

higher command.

In the evening I returned to headquarters. Offstein was waiting for me there. He prepared a training schedule. The place for them was chosen at a height of 218.2, where the river

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### Height Zaozernaya

Velikaya from the south flows out of Lake Uchenoe. The place is suitable: everything there is exactly the same as at Zaozernaya.

After listening to our chief staff officer—the post of chief of staff was still not filled—I began to call the corps commander. Perevertkin said that he would come to the division himself in order to get acquainted in more detail with the plan of the planned sortie, to study the situation on the spot.

He came to us the next morning. After visiting the height and listening to my report, Semyon Nikiforovich approved our plan. |

The preparation of units for the assault on the heights began. Perevertkin promised to give us tanks and allocate two penal companies to force the channel and begin the assault on the heights. And sure enough, two days later the division headquarters got a call that both companies were heading towards us. Taking a few escorts, I went to meet them.

When we dismounted on the lawn, both companies were already lined up there. Their commanders - Captain Nikolai Zinovievich Korolev and Senior Lieutenant Grigory Sergeevich Reshetnyak - introduced themselves. Both looked great. Yes, this is natural. As a rule, the best officers were sent to command penal companies. Each of them was entrusted with 250 people convicted by military tribunals. The most difficult tasks were set for the penalty box. They fought there "until first blood". But often the first wound was also the last.

I greeted the fighters, identified myself to them, expressed confidence that even in the penal company they remained trustworthy Soviet people. When the formation was disbanded, the soldiers surrounded me. A casual conversation began. My attention was drawn to a young, slender fighter with a smart, intelligent

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face. He also stood out for that bearing, smartness that distinguishes a person who is not accidental in military service.

- What's your last name? I asked.

— Private Melnikov.

- Who was before the penalty?

- Aviation school cadet. Convicted two months before release.

- For what?

He hesitated. Then he spoke softly:

- For illegal possession of a camera ...

I didn't go into details - it happens. And the company commander said:

— Here is a suitable candidate for the post of platoon commander.

"That's right," he agreed, "I mean him.

On June 20, we had a dress rehearsal for the upcoming fight. Everything worked out well. Sappers prepared portable slingshots - hedgehogs, anti-tank and anti-personnel mines, elongated charges - special demolition devices for making passages in wire fences, a prefabricated bridge for crossing the channel, camouflage fences that were placed along the shore of Lake Khvoyno, covering us from enemy eyes from the northwest direction. The next day, the soldiers were given rest.

The morning of June 22 broke into a pale pink dawn, in a discordant hubbub and the chirping of birds. The fighters, who had taken their starting position for the attack since the evening, met the dawn in the trenches. Some, curled up on the warm earth, dozed; others, perhaps for the last time in their lives, talked about something.

I spent the night at the observation post. It was housed in dugouts, dug on the cape,  
going into

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in Khvoye. From here, with binoculars, our trenches, the channel and the slope of Zaozernaya facing us were clearly visible.

Our entire operational group was on the OP: Colonel N.E. Voronin, lieutenant colonel I.A. Offstein, Major I.K. Korotenko, artillery commander Colonel A.V. Maximov and other officers of the division headquarters.

The sun was rising quickly, pulling off a light canopy of fog from the lakes. The silence was not broken by anything. The enemy, apparently, did not disclose our preparations.

Time dragged on languidly, approaching the appointed time. I mentally checked myself: did I forget to give some order? Suddenly, the phone rang. The commander of the penal company, senior lieutenant Reshetnyak, reported that the enemy soldiers



went to the reverse slope of the height to rest. In the first trench, only observers and, in some places, machine gunners on duty remained. Everything went according to plan. This pleased me and once again convinced me that the time for the attack was chosen correctly. The commander of another company, Captain Korolev, called. He reported the same.

When the small fat hand of the clock reached the number "9", and the thin and long one buried itself in "12", the silence was split by a roar and a howl. Smoky flames streaked the sky "Katyusha". The slope of Zaozernaya facing us was covered with fountains of earth, clouds of dust and smoke.

Standing on a step made under the embrasure, I clung to the stereo tube. It was clear how our fighters are preparing to throw forward. The flurry of artillery fire did not subside. Under his cover, the sappers began to clear the minefield, to make, undermining elongated charges, wide passages in the barbed wire.

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Soon the divisional engineer, Major Ivan Fyodorovich Orekhov, called: the passages were ready.

A few minutes later, the Katyushas fired a second salvo, and a flock of red flares soared over our NP. From the trenches it was barely audible:

- Attack!

- Go ahead, follow me!

- For motherland for Stalin!

Both companies rose at the same time. The soldiers slipped through the ford channel without stopping. Artillery shifted their fire to the second enemy trench. Direct-fire guns hit the flanks, in the intervals between the enemy's battle formations, at the revived firing points.

A fairly dense line of soldiers ran up the gentle slope. Here the fighters began to throw grenades. A friendly cheer erupts, and the figures in protective tunics disappear into the trench. "Well done!" I mentally admire. After all, only eleven minutes had passed since the signal. Hand-to-hand combat breaks out. The Nazis can't stand it, they run. Our soldiers rush into the depths of the enemy defenses.

Through the stereo tube, I can see the tall figure of Melnikov, at the head of a platoon pursuing the Nazis. This is the same former cadet that I paid attention to when I got acquainted with the penalty box. I remember him for one more meeting. Last night I, being in our first trench, watched the companies take up their starting positions for the attack. Melnikov was also there, already in the role of a platoon leader.

I involuntarily admired the young commander. Calm, restrained, he sensibly set a task for the fighters, explained to them how interaction within the platoon and with neighbors would be carried out, ordered them to disguise themselves. He spoke as if more than once

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sent people into battle. His round face, with full, boyish lips, was concentrated and stern. The confidence of the platoon commander was transferred to the soldiers, they willingly obeyed him. "A born commander," I thought.

Today, as soon as a series of red rockets soared into the sky, Melnikov was the first to jump out of the trench and cross the ford, now he is the first to run to the second enemy trench. I watch him, and I want him to survive, to stay alive.

Here Melnikov tore a grenade from his belt, inserted a fuse into it on the move and, almost without bending down, threw it. The grenades of the platoon fighters followed. "Ur-r-r-a-ah! - The unit broke into the trench. I saw Melnikov jump into it first. Then he lost sight of him.

The battle was all over the slope. The enemy, caught unawares, has so far offered no serious resistance. Our small group broke out onto the Zaozernaya crest from the right flank. A machine gun rumbled from there, and several people fell. The enemy began to come to his senses and in some places to fight back. His resistance gradually increased. However, the attackers continued to move forward quite quickly. The sappers followed the shooters. They set up slingshots, hedgehogs, mines, covering their flanks with them. The right flank was especially strongly strengthened, from where counterattacks of the Nazis were expected.

Every now and then I had to give orders to Alexander Vasil'evich Maksimov to shift artillery and mortar fire to those areas where the resistance of the Nazis was becoming especially stubborn. at

"You are on the phone," adjutant Anatoly Kurbatov handed me the phone.

Bass came from it.

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Captain Korolev reports. He took seventeen prisoners. All from the fifteenth SS division. What to do with them?

- Send it to me.

- Listening Roth has crossed over the crest. We are fighting on the reverse slope. The enemy introduces small units with tanks into the battle.

- Try to knock them over.

Soon Senior Lieutenant Reshetnyak called. He also reported that he was moving forward successfully, but was already dealing with an organized rebuff. I understood that the Nazis, having recovered from the surprise, begin to commit their main forces into battle in order to first stop the offensive, and then go on a counterattack and push us back to the starting line. Well, the enemy had every reason to hope so. He had both an advantageous position and superior numbers on his side. Indeed, in our rifle divisions, with a full set, there were about 7 thousand people. The Germans, however, the number of people reached 12 thousand. It was necessary to fasten up. Only then did we retain the prospect of holding a height of 228.4.

I ordered all the forces of artillery and mortars to suppress the flanking machine guns and direct fire guns, to process the nameless skyscrapers with fire that were located half a kilometer to the west and south of Zaozernaya, to prevent counterattacks from the right flank, to bring the 3rd battalion 674 into battle th regiment. And from behind Zaozernaya came the ever-increasing roar of battle.

The commander of the 674th regiment, Alexei Ivanovich Pinchuk, and the battalion commander, Nikolai Fyodorovich Brylkov, were at my observation post. I gave them a task, showed them landmarks on the ground. They made notes on their maps, checked their watches against mine. Everything was specified and agreed upon. Saying goodbye, the officers left.

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Two hours later we launched an artillery raid. Hundreds of shells flew over the heads of the fighting people and those who were preparing to join the battle. Our tanks crawled out of their shelters. The lead car, approaching the water, froze, then slowly descended into the canal and jumped out to the opposite bank with a jerk. Behind her, more boldly, the others moved. Picking up speed, they rushed over the height.

The infantry rushed after them. Platoon-by-platoon fighters ran across the prefabricated bridge, built by sappers, and clung to the tanks, trying to keep up with them. Artillery also began to cross by gun.

Only now, as if coming to his senses, the enemy opened fire on the positions we occupied on Zaozernaya, along the crossing. But it was already too late. By this time, Reshetnyak's company had attacked enemy units located in the forest beyond the height, and Korolev's company was firmly entrenched on the western slopes of Zaozernaya.

Soon the Nazis launched a counterattack. Our direct-fire guns spoke, machine guns rattled. A wave of enemy infantry, as if bumping into a wall, froze in place, then rushed back, leaving many dead and wounded on the battlefield.

There was a brief lull. But no one had any doubts about the intentions of the enemy: for sure he would not give up Zaozernaya so easily and would launch more than one furious counterattack. And people were preparing to repel these blows. Most of the officers of the political department were in the companies—Voronin took care of that. At such moments as now, political workers were worried that the next task was clear to all the fighters, so that they knew the general situation. Agitators prepared leaflets about the exploits of their comrades. Literally in a few minutes the whole company

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she knew the names of those who were the first to burst into the trench or the first to cross the ridge of heights.

Phone call. I pick up the phone.

— At the phone “One Hundred and First,” — I call my call sign.

“Report how things are going,” the voice of Semyon Nikiforovich Perevertkin is heard.

- The height is completely ours. We fix the flanks. They took about ninety prisoners. The enemy counterattacked with forces from a company to a battalion with tanks. We have a battalion with tanks and artillery brought into action. The counterattack was repulsed. We are expecting an attack by force up to a regiment with tanks. At night, I want to bring in another battalion to expand the bridgehead.

- Agree. We must better strengthen the flanks and prepare artillery fire.

- I'm all set.

“The corps artillery will secure the right flank. Please clarify your cutting edge.

- I report: a ford, seven hundred meters east of height two hundred and eleven, nameless  
height.

Rare shells were exploding on Zaozernaya. Somewhere on the flanks, a firefight flared up and died down - probably guys from Captain Tarasenko's reconnaissance company were operating there. Behind our NP

footsteps and muffled voices could be heard. It was the battalions of the 469th Infantry Regiment that were going to the height. Guns intended for installation on direct fire were transported through the canal.

I knew that at the same time the surviving remnants of the companies of Korolev and Reshetnyak were being withdrawn to the reserve, that on the flanks, especially on the right, sappers were laying mines. The division did not sleep. She prepared for the day's battle.

And he struck as soon as the morning came. Forty minutes enemy shells and mines rained down on Zaozernaya

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and for the crossing. Then the Germans attacked the flanks in order to cut us off from the canal and destroy us. Up to two regiments moved to the right flank from the west, up to a battalion moved to the left from the south-west. Under the cover of artillery fire, soldiers followed the tanks, crouching. Everything was ready for their meeting.

The terrain was now our ally. On the right flank, the battalion of Major Koltunov, which approached here at night, was staunchly holding on — the same battalion that had successfully operated in a demonstration exercise.

Direct-fire guns and machine guns rained down on the enemy. The gunners fired at such a pace that the paint was baked on the barrels. Several tanks smoked. The first chain of Nazis was swept away. The second and third trembled, stopped and began to roll back. Then our "thirty-fours" appeared. They hit the enemy tanks with cannons and crushed the Nazis with their caterpillars.

A terrible sight was presented in this place by the field. Until recently green, now it was as if plowed, brown-black, with red spots here and there. Corpses lay everywhere, the wounded screamed.

Standing on the step in front of the embrasure and looking through the stereo tube at that small area visible from here, where the battle had just died down, I suddenly heard a groan behind me. What kind of delusion, is it not a hallucination? I turned back and was surprised. In the dugout stood, holding his heart, an unfamiliar colonel.

"Son, Zhenya," he said indistinctly. The man was sick. I calmed him down a bit and asked:

Who are you and how did you get here?

"Colonel Melnikov, Deputy Commander for Armored Forces of the 46th Army of the Third Ukrainian Front," he introduced himself. "My son died here yesterday. Prior to that, the eldest - Vita

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li, burned up in the air. He was a pilot. And now here is the youngest, the last. You couldn't know him. He was a penal.

— No, why not, I knew Melnikov from the penalty area. Tall, chubby, from the school. He? Well, you see, I knew your son. Platoon proposed to appoint him. I saw it in combat yesterday. He held up great. Like a real warrior and commander. The platoon reached the ridge first. And he was always ahead of the platoon. Then I lost sight of him. Do you know for sure that he was killed?

- Yes, I looked at the list of casualties in your headquarters. Thanks for the kind words about my son. He was not a criminal. Crazy case...

I remember he was talking about some kind of camera.

- Don't remind me. This is a trophy. I sent it home for Zhenya. The apparatus was sent from home to the school. There they ordered to hand over this thing - a private is not supposed to have such things with him. And he was stubborn: "I won't give it up, this is a gift from my father." And before I had time to recover from the death of Vitaly, I received a letter from home: Yevgeny was in the penalty area, the military unit was such and such. I found out where it was and took off by plane to the headquarters of your army. I got to you this morning, found out that the company was in action, and asked for a list of casualties. In it I found the name of Eugene ...

- How can I help you?

"But what now ... However, if I may ... I would like to take something from Zhenya's things as a keepsake ..."

- Of course of course!

I called my adjutant and made the necessary orders. We said goodbye to Colonel Melnikov.

Already by the light of the lantern, we began to sum up the results of the past hostilities. The enemy suffered significant losses. Up to two thousand soldiers and about fifty tanks remained on the battlefield. Number of captives

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nyh was approaching four hundred. And we lost a lot of people. The damage was especially great in penal companies - few of them survived. And yet the total number of killed and wounded we had two or three times less.

The division captured important positions. Now she "saw" further 10-15 kilometers, could more advantageously position artillery and especially direct fire guns, received excellent starting lines for the army's offensive, which was about to begin.

Shatilov V.M. Banner over the Reichstag. 3rd edition, corrected and enlarged. M.: Voenizdat, 1975. S. 24-41.

Golbraikh E.A. I KNEW THERE IS DEBT!

G.K. - How did the war break into your house?

E.G. — I was born in 1921 in the city of Vitebsk. Before the revolution, my father was a member of the militant organization of the Revolutionary Socialist-Revolutionary Party. After 1917, he retired from any political activity, worked as a simple employee. In the autumn of 1937, my father was arrested, and a week later, after the second interrogation, he was sentenced by the Special Council to be shot. The sentence was carried out in January 1938. I found out about this quite recently. And then they received a notification with a standard phrase on the letterhead: "Sentenced to 10 years without the right to correspondence." So overnight, from a Komsomol patriot, I turned into an outcast with a stigma: the son of an "enemy of the people."

To give you an idea of how great the scale of repression was, I will give a simple example. Of my thirty classmates, eight had one of their parents arrested, while Vanya Sukhov had both his mother and father imprisoned. It's good that at least our family was not expelled and I was not even expelled from schools.

He graduated from the ten-year school and worked as an instructor at the technical school at the Palace of Pioneers. The time has come

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I knew I needed

I was drafted into the army, but they didn't call me, they only enrolled me in the reserve of the second category. This meant that even in wartime, I should not be given weapons in my hands. I did not yet fully realize then that the Soviet government did not trust me, and in my naivety I even applied for admission to the Higher Naval School. I only remember how the military commissar shook his head sadly, without saying a word, accepting my application. In a word, by the beginning of the war, all my friends served in the regular army, and I worked and studied in the first year of the Vitebsk Pedagogical Institute in Physics and Mathematics. When the start of the war was announced, he immediately appeared at the military registration and enlistment office. They said: "Wait for the summons, we will not forget about you." A fighter battalion was formed from the students of the institute, armed with old Belgian rifles without bayonets and sent to patrol the streets. Within a week, we were ordered to surrender our weapons, and our battalion was disbanded.

On July 3, 1941, they heard Stalin's address to the Soviet people, the famous one: "Brothers and sisters! Victory will be ours," and for the first time we realized the gravity of our situation, we felt that the war would be long and difficult. Refugees were moving through the city. But no one gave the order to evacuate. On July 8, he brought his mother with a little sister and an invalid brother to the station. There was a passenger train on the platform, cordoned off by armed Red Army soldiers, and in the forecourt square, the families of Red Army commanders were waiting to board the train. All these families were put into cars, no one else was allowed on the train. A middle-aged, unfamiliar major appeared, took our things and said: "Follow me." He led me past the guards, opened the vestibule door and literally pushed my family inside. The last thing he said was: "Do not leave the train under any circumstances." I don't know the name of this good

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Golbraikh E.A.

a dear person, but my family owes their lives to him, he saved my family from inevitable death. The mother prayed to God for this man every day until the end of her life.

I returned from the station, went to pay for the apartment and electricity, handed over books to the library. He collected some belongings at home and again came to the military registration and enlistment office. And there is no one there, all the workers have already fled. The painting "Voroshilov and Gorky in the TsDKA Shooting Gallery" hangs forlornly on the wall, and the wind drives heaps of papers. I went to the headquarters of the 27th Omsk Red Banner Division, stationed in Vitebsk. Empty. And the next day the Germans bombed the city several times. Then for the first time I saw the dead women and children lying on the city pavement. A glow of fires blazed throughout the city, and on the other bank of the Dvina, German tanks entered through the viaduct. Explosions rumbled, undermined the bridge and the power plant. Broken windows of grocery stores gaped on the central streets. Suddenly I heard the clatter of hooves. A peasant convoy drove into the town square in carts. Marauders. Mostly women. Their faces were a mixture of embarrassment and excitement.

There was no defense of the city. Only at one of the city intersections did I see a Maxim machine gun and a senior lieutenant, a teacher of military affairs at our institute. He shouted: "Nothing! Now we will show these bastards!" Next to him stood a young Red Army soldier in a brand new uniform that had not yet been hugged and looked at the lieutenant with imploring eyes. With a machine gun against tanks. Before the war, almost one hundred and eighty thousand people lived in Vitebsk, and when our troops liberated the city in 1944, there were very few people in it.

G.K. How did your military career begin?

E.G. - They called me on May 2, 1942. As soon as I crossed the threshold of the room where the

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The calling commission, the chairman, seeing Semitic features in my face, immediately began to ask: "Student? Which faculty? Where do you want, in tanks or in artillery?" There was an "opinion" among the people that all Jews had at least a ten-year or higher education. Without waiting for my answers, the chairman of the commission issued a "verdict": "You will go to the tankers!" The military registration and enlistment offices were required to send only educated people to units where combat activity is connected with the use of equipment. And at that time there were not so many of them in the country. For example, in rifle regiments it was extremely rare to meet among soldiers and officers a person who had graduated from a university before the war. Is that the regimental doctor-Jew and the engineer of the regiment.

They sent me to Kazan, to the 24th Training Reserve Tank Regiment. They prepared me as a radio operator arrow. We were engaged in preparation for military operations on Valentine tanks. All tanks were painted dirty yellow, apparently intended for military operations in the desert. I still remember with hatred the tank machine gun designed by Bren. This machine gun weighed twenty kilograms, and during training to leave the tank, I was obliged to grab this "club" with me and run further with it, simulating an attack on foot.

A week before being sent to the front, the regimental commissar approached me and said: "We decided to elect you as a Komsomol organizer, a rally is in two hours. Get ready to address the soldiers." I honestly tell him: "My father was condemned as an "enemy of the people". The commissar's face turned white, he silently turned around and left. On the same day, I was called to the combat unit, they read out the order of expulsion from the regiment and gave me a direction to the reserve rifle regiment stationed in the village of Suslonger, Mari ASSR.

Many remembered this place with longing and anger.

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Golbraikh E.A.

Dozens of long dugouts, each for a whole company, two-story bunks, instead of beds, lay spruce branches. Dense forest all around. An abundance of evil biting mosquitoes. The people in the regiment are almost without exception wild and semi-literate, drafted from the forest and taiga outback. All combat training consisted of marching on the parade ground with wooden sticks in hand! There were no rifles! 600 grams of a sticky mass called "bread" were given per day. Balanda will be poured at dinner - the bottom of the enameled bowl was visible, so that, without using spoons, they drank the balance over the edge of the bowl. The battalion commander came up to me, an elderly man from the "reserves". He offered to remain in the battalion as a full-time clerk, and promised that we would "trip" together in the rear until the end of the war. I refused and already on the ninth day of my stay in Suslonger I left with a marching company to the front.

G.K. What front did you get on? Where did you receive your baptism of fire?

E.G. - I ended up near Stalingrad, in the Don steppes. Do you remember the movie "They Fought for the Motherland"? A difficult time for the whole country and for our army. Our 594th Rifle Regiment of the 207th Rifle Division occupied the defense northwest of Stalingrad. The battles were so bloody that after a week of being on the front line, I could not believe that I was still alive and not even wounded! I made a "dizzying career", already on the third day I was in command of the squad, in which there were four fighters left along with me. The remaining seven fighters of my squad were out of action already in the first battles. And a couple of weeks later he accepted a platoon, already in the rank of sergeant. Sometimes it was so hard that death seemed like a release. And these are not empty words.

They bombed us almost around the clock. People went crazy, unable to withstand the wild tension. Bombing the squares. I had to visit dozens of times during the war

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I knew I needed

under bombardment. On the so-called "Miussky Front", on the Sambor Heights, Matveev Kurgan, Saur-Mogila, in Dmitrovka, called "Little Stalingrad" due to the fierceness and stubbornness of the fighting, and many other places. But what happened to experience in the Don steppes! There is nothing worse than cluster bombing. The two-meter cylinder opens, and dozens of small bombs go in a shoal towards the target. The sky is not visible. If you don't have a reliable shelter, or if you've been bombed in a field, you're done. That bomb that separated from the plane above you will carry this one. But the one with a short flight is yours. The heart-rending howl of flying bombs. The screech becomes unbearable. You lie down and pray: "Lord, if they kill you, if only right away, so that without torment."

I'll just tell you about one combat day in the summer of 1942. They took up defensive positions near junction No. 564. A train of burned-out T-34 tanks stood on the tracks. No one knew what a tragedy broke out here and how this echelon perished. In the morning they went on the attack with the support of tanks and - just fantastic for 1942 - with the support of the Katyusha FIRE. They pushed the Germans back a kilometer, it came to a bayonet attack. A fragment hit me in the face, and in the heat of battle, for a long time I could not understand why blood was dripping on the bed of my rifle.

The remnants of the company were taken back to the regiment commander's reserve. Our tank wound a wire around the tracks, and the 2nd battalion of the regiment was left without communication. They sent two signalers, no one returned. The commander of the regiment Khudoley orders me: "Komsomol, by personal example, forward!" Many could not pronounce my surname, so they called me "Komsomol", because by that time I was already a Komsomol organizer of the company. Crawled to the wrecked tank. I look, both signalmen are dead. The work of a German sniper. Slightly raised - a shot! A sniper's bullet hit the body of an already shot signalman. I lie behind

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Golbraikh E.A.

killed, I can't move, the sniper will immediately kill. He clamped the ends of the wires with his teeth. There is a connection!

The commissar of the regiment Dynin crawls past, heading for the battalion. This was already an elderly man who, being the commissar of the medical battalion, asked for himself to join the rifle regiment. The patriot's heart and conscience did not allow him to be in the rear. He went on the attack on a par with everyone else, with a rifle in his hands. He saw me, just waved his hand at me, and at the same moment a sniper hit him right in the heart. I understand that I will not lie here for a long time, sooner or later the German will kill me too. Then a commotion began on the front line, he fastened the pieces of wire and, under the "silence", jumped up and ran whole to our trenches. He came to the battalion's NP, and the battalion commander grins: "Arrived at the duty station." The order had already been transmitted by telephone: "Sergeant Holbreich is appointed commissar of the battalion."

Asked for food. They gave me a bowler hat, and in it - unprecedented wealth: pasta with stew. Artillery and mortar shelling began, I covered the bowler hat with my body so that clods of earth would not get into the food. Nearby is a trench of artillery observers, shouting to me: "Crawl towards us!" I hesitated for a couple of seconds, and then crawled, trying to fit the bowler in the best way, and at that time a direct hit into the observers' trench. They stayed until night. Repelled three attacks. In the evening there was a "holiday", they brought water. Each was given half a pot of tea. If you want - drink, if you want - wash your hands from someone else's blood. We suffered greatly from thirst there.

Do you know what is most memorable from the events of that day? Our wrecked tank is standing, inside something is burning and exploding. A soldier, judging by his appearance, a nationalist from Central Asia, approaches the tank with a bowl of porridge hanging on a bayonet. With a purely eastern impossibility

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With great care, he puts the cauldron on the burning tank to heat it up. Life goes on. The usual front-line Stalingrad ordinary day in August 1942 ...



G.K. - You were the deputy commander of a separate army penal company of the 51st Army in 1944-1945. Tell me about the penalties. How did you get to serve in the penal company? What was the structural organization of your unit?

E.G. — In the penal company, I asked myself. A soldier, just like an officer, by the way, does not choose his fate in war: where you are sent, you will go there. But when appointed to a position in a penal company, consent was formally required. The penal companies were created by Stalin's order No. 227 of July 28, 1942, known as the "Not one step back" order, after the surrender of Rostov and Novocherkassk.

Each combined arms army had three penal companies. The air and tank armies did not have their own penal units and sent their penal units to the combined arms units. On the front line there were two penal companies at the same time. Reinforcements arrived daily from neighboring regiments - one or two people. Any regiment commander had the right to send a soldier or sergeant to the penal company, but not an officer, by his order. The escort brought an extract from the order, received a "signature in receipt" - that's all the formalities. Why were they sent to the penal company? Failure to comply with an order, manifestation of cowardice in battle, insulting a senior commander, fighting, theft, looting, AWOL, or maybe the regimental commander simply didn't like the LPG, and so on and so forth. The organization of the penal company is as follows. The staff of the company - eight officers, four sergeants and twelve horses - is located at the army reserve regiment and, in anticipation of replenishment, is slowly drinking away the trophies.

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An echelon of criminals arrives from the rear, four hundred or more people, and the company immediately becomes a battalion, continuing to be called a company. The criminals are accompanied by convoy troops who hand them over to us according to the act. We don't post security. This makes a bad impression, while the confidence shown gives us some goodwill. There is a certain risk. But we are going for it. What a people! There are bandits, and recidivist criminals, and hiding from the draft, and deserters, and just thieves. It happened that unfair victims also arrived from the rear. Being late for work more than twenty minutes was considered absenteeism, they were judged for absenteeism, and the term could be replaced by a penal company. With one of the echelons arrived a teenager, almost a boy, at least he seemed so. On the way, the criminals took away his rations, he became so weak that he could not get out of the car on his own. Send him to the kitchen.

The term of imprisonment was replaced approximately in the following proportion: up to 3-4 years in prison - a month of a penal company, up to seven years - two months, up to ten - there was no longer a term - three months. Officers demoted by the verdict of the Military Tribunal were also sent to penal companies. If the stage is large and there were not enough officers, it was from them that the missing platoon commanders were appointed. And these were not the worst commanders. Their desire to be rehabilitated was great, but to die... To die even in an ordinary company is a simple matter. After the war, statistics calculated that the average life expectancy of a rifle platoon commander in an offensive is no more than a week.

Piraf was filmed on the first wound. Or, much less often, after serving time. Sometimes, after the wounded, a petition was sent to the military prosecutor for the removal of a criminal record. This concerned mainly

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trained officers, but for their courage and heroism they sometimes wrote to criminals.

Very rarely and, as a rule, if, after being wounded, the penal did not leave the battlefield or performed a feat, they were presented for a reward. We did not know about the results of our petitions, there was no feedback. In the film "Gu-Ga" there is an episode where the foreman beats, that is, "teaches", a penalty box, and even on

order of the company commander. It is absolutely incredible that this could actually happen. Every officer and sergeant knows that in battle they can be ahead of the offended. Penalties are not God's lambs. And they don't have wooden rifles in their hands. Another thing is that the company commander had the right to add a term of stay in the company, and for committing a serious crime - to shoot. And there was such a case in our company. The deserter was caught by the penitentiaries themselves, shot in front of the formation and buried across the road so that the very memory of him would be erased. It is not easy to talk about this now, but then there was a different time and a different attitude towards such things.

Vladimir Karpov, a well-known writer, Hero of the Soviet Union, who himself drank a penal company, writes that the officers of the penal companies with their penal companies did not go on the attack. Yes and no. If there are experienced commanders from the penalty box, you can not go. And if not, or "run out", you have to go yourself. For the most part, that is exactly what happened. Here is one of many examples. Two deputy company commanders, senior lieutenant Vasily Demyanenko and myself, led the company into the attack. When the task was already almost completed, I was wounded by a shrapnel in the chest. I still remember my first thought at that moment: "Don't fall! So it's easy!" Neither we nor the Germans went on the attack in droves, as in the movies. The losses would be too great. A rather rare chain moves, where it is running, and where it is crawling. Old on the attack

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Golbraikh E.A.

Eshsya keep lateral vision comrade. Demyanenko was about thirty paces from me, saw that I was staggering, and I jumped into the funnel. Ran up: "Where?" Silently, I point to a hole in a sheepskin coat. "Skip the whole dialogue - two words. He bandaged me. The fragment fell into the pocket of my tunic, in which there was a bundle of letters and photographs from the rear (considering our age, not only from my mother). This saved, otherwise the fragment would have passed right through. In the medical battalion, they grabbed this fragment by the tip peeking out from under the rib and pulled it out. And I immediately returned to the company.

How did I end up in the penal company?

During the next reorganization, I ended up in the officer reserve of the 51st Army, commanded by Lieutenant General Yakov Grigoryevich Kreizer, after the war General of the Army. Kreizer received the title of Hero of the Soviet Union in 1941 as commander of the 1st Moscow Proletarian Division. It was my first time in the rear of the army. I was struck by the huge number of idle officers of all ranks, with a businesslike scurrying about with folders and without. Is there a job for them all?

The closer to the front, the less people. First, the rear, economic and special units, medical battalions, larger artillery, and then smaller ones, closer to the front line, the mortars, you go to the front line - you get a lonely feeling, where did everyone go? In war, as in life, everyone knows what he should not do. In the officer's canteen, food was served in plates! I was shocked. Young women and girls in hospital gowns walked around the village in pairs. It took me a while to figure out what puzzled me about them - no bandages, no crutches, no hands on the "carriage". I asked a passing officer: "Who is this?" In response, I heard: "What are you, pour

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Nantes, stupid?! This is a venereal hospital." Men during that period of the war were not treated. Only if he was wounded in the hospital - along the way. Boring. I don't know anyone, and nobody knows me. By the end of the week, I heard that the deputy commander of the army penal company had died. And I went to the personnel department.

Do not rush to write me down as a hero. I'm not brave. Quite the opposite. But I had already fought in the infantry and knew that there was no big difference between ordinary rifle companies and penal companies. Yes, penal companies are assigned to reconnaissance in force, to break through the enemy's defenses, or to put them in the path of his advance. Aren't ordinary rifle battalions assigned? It was in an ordinary rifle battalion of an ordinary rifle regiment, assigned to reconnaissance in battle, that I should have died. And when the consciousness enveloped in black despair faded away, my friend Sasha Kislichko saved me, who died the next minute. And all these years I have been painfully thinking: if he had not come to save me, would Sasha have remained alive? So I risked a little. The son of the "enemy of the people", except for the rifle battalion, did not shine. But there are many advantages. First. Penal companies, as a rule, do not stand on the defensive. Infantry soldiers will understand me without details. Our full name: a separate army penal company - OAShR. The last two letters served as the basis for the fact that the call signs of the penal companies on all fronts were the same - "Shu-Ra". But the first two letters had special meaning. For an ordinary company, in addition to their commanders, there were two deputies in the battalion, a party organizer and a Komsomol organizer, and three deputies in the regiment and the same political workers, also in the division there were headquarters and a political department. And all of them, singly or in a crowd, in a lull, between fights, when you want to write a letter or just relax, come to your heart to bore about clean collars,

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combat leaflet, party and Komsomol meetings, then no one will come to the penal company. We are not them. They have enough worries of their own, and no one, especially at the front, will do more than they should. But we simply do not have a party or Komsomol organization. Full-time officers are registered in the reserve regiment and occasionally pay dues there.

The commander of a penal company in his rights is equal to the commander of the regiment and is operationally subordinate to the commander of the division, who will be attached to a specific operation. This is included in the concept of "separate". And the army is not up to us. They have more important things to do. True, there was a case when a major from the Political Administration came and said: "You feed your penalized worse. The commanders complain: you threaten a soldier with a penal company, and he says to you: "Well, send it! The food is good there." And it is. An ordinary company receives allowances from a battalion, a battalion from a regiment, a regiment from divisional warehouses, and a division from army warehouses. Karamzin also remarked: "If you want to express in one word what is being done in Rus', you should say: they steal." There is no need to think that something has changed in more than two hundred years. In all instances, a little, but they will steal it. Completely nothing reaches the soldier. And here, oddly enough, there is no one to steal. And here comes into force the word - "army". Our foreman receives allowances directly from army warehouses. True, they "look into his hands" too. But we are not poor, we will bring some of the trophies. The sergeant-major receives the products completely and of good quality, undiluted vodka. The officers will be brought long short fur coats, and not cloth breeches, but chic blue wool riding breeches. And uniforms for nggrafnikov will receive not the last term, but quite decent. In addition, we have unaccounted for horses, instead of two

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twenty horses - a small herd. If necessary, we kill a younger horse. And what's your veal! Let's plow someone's garden. Yes, another important factor. In addition to the eternal Russian pity for the suffering prisoner, every rear quartermaster was always afraid of someday "roaring into the penalty area." Provided us honestly. There were other advantages: one and a half salary, accelerated, even against the front, length of service. However, I hardly felt it. We were supervised by the army department Smersh. But I don't remember them getting in the way or visiting us often. They had a lot of things to do in the Baltics.

In a word: "Live - I don't want to." Good in the penal company! Good, good, but not so good. Toward the end of the war, when no one wanted to die anymore, three people deserted at once. The company commander and I appeared "before the bright eyes" of a member of the Military Council of the Army, who, in a popular form, using "folklore expressions", to make it more familiar and understandable, explained what we, in his opinion, are, got out of some then the folders of award lists for the Order of Alexander Nevsky for the commander and for the Order of the Patriotic War [degrees for me, tore them with a graceful movement and threw them under the table, at the same time informing us that the assignment of the next military ranks to us was delayed. And already in the back bro. forces: "Find! And shoot!" Not found. And very sorry. What was not found. And they didn't shoot. Then. Now, no sorry.

BULLSHIT

There were many other excesses, for which they did not pat on the head at all.

The concept of "penal battalions" has become established in the literature. Battalion - it sounds proud. IN the very word

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there is something solemnly sad, some kind of inner rhythm and romance. And penal companies are going into battle!

There were also penal battalions. This is completely different. Penal battalions were created at the fronts, at the end of the war there were about seventy of them in the army, practically one penal battalion for each combined arms army. Officers not demoted by the tribunal fought as ordinary fighters in the rank up to colonel inclusive. Everyone has their own reason for getting into the penal battalion. Leaving positions without orders, abuse of power, theft, and even duel(!).

The composition of the assault battalions - there was such a variety - commanders of the Red Army who emerged from the encirclement or escaped from captivity, went through the "purgatory" of the NKVD camps, where they had to prove that they had not abandoned their weapons and had not gone over to the side of the enemy voluntarily. For them, the timing did not change. The term was the same for all: six months! In practice, the number of variable composition of penal units was not strictly regulated. The battalion could have up to a thousand people - a regiment! But there could only be a hundred people.

In the personnel department, they looked at me with some surprise: "We have amateurs working there." I answer: "And I will be an amateur, I'm not asking to be sent to the rear." I received an order and thought about it. It would be necessary to come with something in the company. The choice here is small. He knocked on the door of the peasant's house, blushing, handed over the soldier's linen. The hostess brought out a bottle of moonshine, plugged with a paper cork. I did not carry a duffel bag, the bottle does not fit into a field bag, I stuffed it into the pocket of my overcoat, put a mitten on a suspiciously protruding neck. On passing cars quickly got to the front line. The mortarmen, standing at the edge of the forest, pointed to a lone tree in the field - the company commander's CL - and said: "You

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don't go there until the evening. The sniper is aiming at this place." I toiled, I toiled, the evening is still far away. Give, I think, I'll take a chance - and pulled with all my might. Quiet. The sniper seemed to be dozing off. In the corner of the dugout sat a small senior lieutenant. He introduced himself: Demyanenko Vasily, deputy drillser. And, suspiciously glancing at my pocket, he asked: "What is it that the mitten in the tebe is turned upside down?" I take out a bottle. Demyanenko immediately blossomed: "Oh! Tse dilo! And leave the commander." So I ended up in a penal company.

G.K. — How strong was the motivation of the penalty boxers to “atone for their guilt with blood”?

E.G. — One should not think that all the penalty boxers were eager to fight. Here's an example for you. The attack bogs down. The survivors lie among the dead and wounded. But there were many more of us! Where are the others? Together with the company commander, captain Shchuchkin, under German fire, we return to the starting line. This is true! A group of penalty boxers hid in the trench, hoping to sit out the fight. And this is when every soldier counts! From opposite ends of the trench, holding a pistol in each hand, in the left - the usual TT, in the right - a captured parabellum, it is heavier, almost bursting over the trench - one foot on one parapet, the other on the opposite, we move towards each other and, accompanying our actions with the appropriate text, we shoot over the heads of these parasites, without aiming and not worrying about the integrity of their skulls. They quickly get out and run into the chain. Now, when I remember this episode, I think: “Lord! Was it really me?”

This cannot happen in penal and assault battalions. Everything is at stake here. These officers are not deprived of their ranks and in most cases do not have a criminal record. If they are wounded or served time, they have the right to their former positions (they have the right

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or, but, as a rule, returned to units with a reduction). My comrade Lazar Belkin fought in one of these battalions, which marked the beginning of the Iasi-Kishinev operation with its brilliant attack. On the day of the attack, they were given 200 (!) grams of vodka, brought to the front line directly in barrels, half a pack of shag, and the order was read out: “At five o'clock in the morning, after the Katyush salvo, the battalion goes on the attack.” At five o'clock everyone was ready. Silence. Quiet at six o'clock. At seven in the morning they announced that the offensive was cancelled. The disillusioned soldiers dispersed along the trench. Three hours later, a new order - offensive at exactly ten! And no “Katyushas”! At ten o'clock the battalion went on the attack in complete silence. Without shouting “Hurrah. But it was not just a simple battalion, but a battalion of penalists. Captured three rows of trenches. German six-barreled mortars turned towards the enemy and fired a volley. Towards Lazar, a German officer ran towards the machine gun. Lie down for a machine gun. Point blank! And here is happiness - a misfire! The tape is skewed or something. The officer started to run. Late. Lazar's grenade was already flying. The enemy had the impression that the main blow was being dealt here. The Germans began to hastily throw equipment and reinforcements. Until late in the evening, the battalion fought off attacks, and by nightfall the remnants of the battalion were forced to return to their original positions. Out of almost a thousand people, one hundred and thirty remained on their feet. Most of the participants in the attack were wounded, about a third died. G.K. - In the film “Goo-Ga”, for example, the detachment causes “sympathy” no more than it would cause a detachment of German punishers. What is your opinion about detachments? E.G. There are many unfortunate errors in this movie with a strange title. Lies in small things cause distrust in everything else. I have already said that they do not run in crowds to attack, but they are, in a

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Dimomu, the laws of the genre, “mass character” - our “horse”. The company commander has field epaulettes, and the buttons on his overcoat are gold and the star on his cap is red, and this is at the front! Both the star and the buttons were green. But the detachment is of particular annoyance. The detachments never accompanied penal companies to the front and did not stand behind them !!!

The detachments are located not on the front line, but near checkpoints, on the roads, on the routes of possible withdrawal of troops. Although ordinary units are more likely to run than penal ones. Detachments are not elite units, where fighters-well done are selected. This is an ordinary military unit with somewhat unusual tasks. And in this movie? There are always more guard detachments than penalty boxers, and it begs the desire to swap them. For some reason, everyone is dressed in brand new (where does such luxury come from?!) - overcoats with red sewn-in shoulder straps!

Sewn-in epaulettes were supposed only for generals, all the rest - from an ordinary soldier to a colonel - wore fastened ones. And red! At the front?! A detachment in helmets! This is what you need to think about. Helmets and in combat units did not really complain. Maybe in the forty-second year, the detachments broke firewood, but who would stop the units running in a panic?! And it is useless to seek justice in war.

G.K. — You said that you do not have the slightest desire to analyze the series “Penal Battalion” in detail. And, nevertheless, at least a few comments on the series.

E.G. - This series has only one merit - a wonderful game of actors. Everything else is complete nonsense, pardon the harsh expression. Let's stop on the main thing.

The officers who, by the verdict of the tribunal, retained their military ranks, were never sent  
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penal companies. Only in officer penal battalions.

Criminals were never sent to serve their sentences in officer penal battalions - only in penal companies, like privates and sergeants.

Political prisoners were never sent to penal units, although many of them, true patriots, rushed to the front to defend their Motherland. Their destiny was logging. The case of Vladimir Karpov, convicted under Article 58 and sent to a penal company, is unique!

Penal companies have never been located in settlements. And outside the combat situation, they remained in the field, in trenches and dugouts. Contact this non-

, a simple contingent with the civilian population through

was unpredictable consequences. I will give examples later. Never, even after a minor injury and

. regardless of the time spent in the penalty area

,  
separation, no one was sent to the penalty box for

second. The slightest scratch - has already "redeemed with blood."

None of the penalty boxers has ever addressed the authorities with the word “citizen”. Only "comrade". And they didn't poke a soldier - “penalty box”, everyone was “comrades”. Do not forget that the charter of the Red Army applied to penal units.

Punishers have never been appointed commanders of penal units! This is no longer a bluff, but an irresponsible lie. The commander of a penal battalion is, as a rule, a lieutenant colonel, and the commanders of its five companies—three rifle, machine-gun, and mortar companies—are regular officers, not penitentiaries. Of the penal officers, only platoon commanders are appointed.

Blessing the penalty box before the fight is bullshit, a mockery of the truth and an unworthy strum

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rush before the Church. In the Red Army, this was not and could not be.

I understand that an artist or director has the right to be creative, but to make a series about the war, in which there is not a penny of historical truth!

G.K. — Did the commander of the penal company have the right to select soldiers for his unit?

E.G. - Commanders of penal companies do not complete their units: whoever they send you, you will fight with them. Another important detail. It was not customary to ask the penalized for what they were convicted. And which of the fighters was a former criminal-recidivist nicknamed Vaska-Zhigan, and who was a former order-bearer-machine gunner, only our full-time clerk officer knew for sure. He was in charge of the personal files of the contingent of the penal company.

G.K. — There is a fairly common misconception that all the penalty boxers were ardent patriots. Were there cases of soldiers moving from penal units to the side of the enemy?

E.G. - Certainly. Although in my company such cases were not recorded. Where to go? To the Germans in the Courland "cauldron"? There was a social basis for transitions; many were offended by the Soviet regime. The former dispossessed, the sons of the repressed were considered potential candidates for transition. There were very few defectors at the end of the war, but to be perfectly honest, I would say that such a shameful phenomenon as desertion was quite common. Few people know, but since 1942 a secret order has been in effect: "Relatives and countrymen, in order to avoid collusion and going over to the side of the enemy, should not be sent to one unit." Only from the middle of 1944 this order was not strictly carried out. I have repeatedly witnessed the reception of reinforcements in an ordinary rifle regiment.

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The regiment commander walked along the line and "pulled out" people not according to the list, but pointing with his finger. Company commanders stood nearby and made lists of names. If a fighter survived after the first battles and showed himself well in them, he could later ask the commanders to be transferred to a company with a fellow countryman or relative, but this was rare, everyone was already getting used to new comrades, and people already had worries. there were others.

G.K. Were there women in penal companies?

E.G. - Women were not sent to penal companies. To serve their sentences, they were sent to the rear, to prison. However, this happened very rarely.

There are no medical workers in the penal companies either. Upon receipt of the assignment, a nurse is sent from the medical battalion or a neighboring regiment. In one of the battles, the nurse was wounded. Hearing a woman's cry on the left flank, I hurried there. She was wounded in the arm, apparently not seriously, she was already bandaged. But shock, blood, pain. Then, this is still the front line, the battle is still going on, what good - they can add. Through tears, she uttered a monologue that can only be partially quoted: "How to "love" (she used a different verb), so go with the whole regiment! And how to bandage, so there is no one! You will be cured, I won't give it to anyone!" — Did she keep her threat — remained unknown.

G.K. — Were trophy weapons and uniforms used by the penalists?

E.G. — Captured weapons were used everywhere and were very popular. We hand over the weapons of those who were out of action to the foreman, and he looks into his "ledger" and asks: "What are you fighting there for? According to the statement, all the weapons of the company have long been handed over! And without a captured pistol, at the end of the war, it is hard to imagine any infantry commander. It was a craze.

But with uniforms - too much. Nobody boo

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children run along the front line in a German tunic, especially in battle. They will immediately kill their own "fool". And then they will sort it out. And even though you will sing "Along the Pitserskaya Street" in Russian at that time, they will take you for a Vlasovite and shoot you. Many of them had German boots, and it was not a century to walk in windings.

G.K. - Forgive me for reminding you of the series "Penal Battalion" again. But the episode with the campaign of the penalty box in reconnaissance. How real is he?

E.G. I repeat that this is complete nonsense. Imagine a group of penalty boxers went to reconnaissance and did not return. She disappeared without a trace or was killed on the "neutral" line, and no one knows who died and who was taken prisoner. What will the company commander say during the interrogation in his defense when the special officers saw him "assistance in deliberately going over to the side of the enemy"? Where can we find such "kamikaze"? If the penalty box went on reconnaissance, it was only together with officers from the permanent staff of the company. Yes, they did not take criminals into reconnaissance exits, but former regimental scouts who already had experience in reconnaissance searches. Further, penalty boxers almost never stand on the defensive; this is a strike unit, designed for several attacks, to break through the enemy's defense. All information about the enemy, including intelligence, is received directly from the operations department and division headquarters. So why do the penalists crawl into reconnaissance? "Languages" to collect? A couple of times, before reconnaissance in battle, we were asked, if possible, to capture a German, but they did not particularly insist, they did not set a super task. Once they captured a German major. He behaved arrogantly, he cursed us in German, they did not mess with him and shot him. No one wanted to receive an order for him. Too convinced Nazi got caught.

But most of all, it infuriates that in the series almost every god is taken prisoner by Germans day.

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Golbraikh E.A.

Are we fighting morons? At the front, until one "language" is obtained, many reconnaissance groups will fall into the ground with bones. And here?! It's as if people go to the Palace of Culture to dance, and not behind the front line.

In the officer penal battalions, they often went on reconnaissance, but there the commanders trusted the penitentiaries. And with our public - a special conversation.

G.K. — Were you afraid of being shot in the back in combat? Did the penalists settle scores with the commanders in this way? How widespread was this phenomenon in penalty areas?

E.G. "That didn't happen often. In order to avoid such excesses, they tried to treat the penalized like ordinary soldiers, spoke with respect to everyone, but no one flirted with them and did not "eat moonshine". They, the penalized, have nothing to lose, there is the principle - "you die today, I'll die tomorrow." But there were cases. I heard about them. And the platoon could lose in cards. What to do - the audience is like that. But if the company commander behaved like the last bastard or shot those he didn't like with his unlimited power, then he had a lot of chances to get a bullet in the next battle from "his wards". But, for example, if the "informal leader", as they said, "godfather", from the criminal fraternity began excessively brazenly the right to pump, they say, a liter of alcohol for everyone, otherwise we won't go on the attack - the conversation with him was short. Yes, and in ordinary rifle units this sometimes happened. Of course, only at the forefront. For example, I know a reliable case when their own soldiers "slapped" a battalion commander in battle. The battalion commander was a rude creature, he humiliated soldiers and officers, ruined people in vain. He showed all the initiative, earned orders. To characterize this nit, I will give one example. In his battalion, a soldier Grinberg blew himself up with a grenade and



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twelve Germans in a captured dugout. The company commander approached and "has given a hint", they say, to the Hero or to the order it is necessary to introduce. In response, I heard from the battalion commander: "One filthy Jew has become less!" His fighters shot him, the whole battalion knew, and no one betrayed him. You see, no one betrayed! This is in Stalin's times!

The soldier was not always a silent "gray cattle" sent to the slaughter. But we, in the penal company, always tried to win the trust of the soldiers and shared with them all the hardships.

G.K. - In the penal units, the Germans were taken prisoner or ...

E.G. - Basically: "or". Now you do not understand this, but then... By the end of the war, bitterness reached its extreme limits, and on both warring sides. In the heat of battle, even if the German raised his hands, they could be shot, as they say, "in the course of the play." There were dozens of cases when the same "surrendered enemy" ran past and picked up a machine gun from the ground and fired at the backs of the attackers. But if the German after the battle crawled out of the trench with his hands up, then his chances of surviving were quite high. And if another twenty "comrades" surrendered with him, as a rule, no one will touch them. But again an example. Rota continues to fight. There are twenty of us left, and we need to carry out the task further. Eight Germans were taken prisoner. Where can I get two or three extra fighters for escort? Hundreds of captured Romanians were sent to the rear without an escort. And the Germans... The company commander gives the order: "For consumption." A fighter with a light machine gun shoots the Germans. Everyone is silent. A minute later we go on the attack.

NEITHER JUSTIFY NOR REJECT

What the Nazis did on our land cannot be forgiven! How many times have we seen the bodies of our guys torn to pieces, captured by the Germans. Under Siauliai you

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The Germans beat the neighboring rifle regiment from the village of Kuzhi and captured our medical battalion, located in a two-story building. Our company was thrown to the rescue of the infantry. But we couldn't get through! The tanks blocked the approaches to the village and shot at us point-blank. We retreated to a high-rise and saw through binoculars how the Nazis were throwing our wounded out of the windows and burning them alive. What kind of prisoners after that can we talk about?! Penalty prisoners were taken relatively rarely. It is a fact. Many families died, houses were destroyed. People took revenge. And what kind of reaction should be expected? SS men, tankers and Vlasov men were often killed right on the spot. We had soldiers who had passed German captivity. After all the horrors that they experienced, all the words of political leaders about humanity were an empty phrase for them.

Another terrible episode. In 1943, in the summer, our rifle battalion went on the attack. They took the village in the forehead, went to the machine guns. After the battle, there were very few lucky ones left alive. The company commander sat on the ground and bled. A shrapnel tore off his lower jaw. Summed up five captured Germans. The fighter asks: "Where are they?" The commander took a notepad out of his field bag, tore out a sheet of paper, and — with blood! - on it he wrote: "Kill."

But there was a case, in the same place, near Shauliai, which still haunts me. Our defense was crossed by a man without weapons, in shabby civilian clothes. He did not have any documents with him. Perhaps he escaped from the camp and made his way home. Unfortunately, he did not understand a word of either Russian or German. They called a Lithuanian - the same thing. And he talked and talked, trying to explain at least something. Most likely, it was a Latvian or an Estonian, but no one knew either Latvian or Estonian. The easiest way was to send him to a higher headquarters. But with him it was necessary

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send an escort. Shooting is easier. As the "great leader" said: "There is no person - there is no problem." I tried to prevent violence. The boss looked at me in bewilderment. Also scolded.

Repeatedly, when I tried to stop the execution of a prisoner, my comrades told me: "Why do you feel sorry for them (?!), they completely exterminated your nation!" It hurts me to remember all this. There were strict orders forbidding reprisals against prisoners of war, and in many divisions they were strictly observed. I saw a lot of fines convicted for shooting prisoners, but...

It was not the comfrey workers who especially sinned with executions, but the staff servants. The same Romanians had to be protected from the "heroes of the second echelon" on the way to captivity. They liked to shoot at the unarmed. The Germans always knew who was on the front line in front of them. If they knew that they were penalized, they fought us more steadfastly and fiercely. We ourselves created this "pleasure" for ourselves, thanks to our attitude towards the prisoners. All these stories that the Germans' hamstrings were shaking at the sight of an attacking penal company have no foundation whatsoever. The Germans did not care deeply who was attacking them. Psychologically, it was probably hard for the Germans to fight against the penal officer battalions, the desire of the penal battalions to atone for their "sins" before the Motherland with blood was too great. But the Germans fought intelligently, skillfully and bravely, no matter how hard it is to admit.

G.K. — How were the fined prisoners released who were not wounded in battles? Did the tribunal meet to decide on release from punishment, or was their case heard by someone else?

E.G. — The company commander had the right to cancel the punishment for heroism even to those soldiers who did not have expired

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period of stay in the company, specified in the verdict. And in fact it happened like this. After several operations, we had about two dozen fighters left. Not injured. But they took part in the battles, and with good reason we are transferring them to a neighboring rifle regiment. All papers with official stamps are filled in on the spot and issued to soldiers. Only a list of "redeemed and manifested" signed by the commander goes to the headquarters. The soldiers surrender their weapons, and "Hello again, Red Army!" They will receive weapons in their new units. No meetings of the tribunals or consultations with special officers. Until the last soldier, we did not fight. Further, whoever from the permanent staff remained alive returned to the army reserve regiment in anticipation of the next echelon with "criminal reinforcements". "Convicts" are brought in, we sign the act of "acceptance", the personnel are lined up, and we go out to the company, the commanders introduce themselves, each separately. Then we line up at the location of the company. The penitentiaries received their weapons directly from us. They received uniforms and were assigned to platoons. Everything is quite prosaic. No one went to the rear to collect fines.

G.K. — Did the national composition of penal companies differ from ordinary rifle companies?

E.G. - There were fewer nationalists than in rifle units. Mostly we were Slavs. There were practically no Jews among the soldiers of the penal company. During the eight months of my stay in the company—a very long time during the war—only one Jew was caught, and I was immediately called to look at him. It was a tailor from the Baltics, and he did not look dejected or unhappy. The Jews have a highly developed sense of duty: if they got into the penalty area, it was only by accident or for some trifle. Well, the anti-Semitic commander could "kick" into the penalty area. And it happened.

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Although Semyon Aria mentions several Jews, his comrades in the penal company. In war, you never know where you will be tomorrow. As in the saying: "In damp soil, in a penal company or in a regimental reconnaissance." Among the officers of my company were three Ukrainians and four Russians.

On the other hand, the neighboring penal company was commanded by the Jew Levka Korsunsky with the manners of an Odessan Mishka Yaponchik. Having come to visit us at a quiet moment on a chic trophy phaeton harnessed by a pair of handsome horses, he took off a chic Swiss watch from his left hand and threw it to the left, took it off from his right hand and threw it to the right. It was a gesture! It is difficult for a modern person to explain. Watches were an object of constant desire and often served as a reward. Our soldiers, who did not know a word of German, quickly learned to pronounce: "Bethel from di ur". An unsuspecting German man in the street willingly took out a pocket watch, and they immediately migrated to the pocket of the victorious warrior.

After the war, he searched for Korsunsky and Teschin for a long time, but to no avail. How was their fate? Are you alive?

G.K. - Have you ever met with any of the former penalized men of your company after the war?

E.G. - After the Victory, I served for some time in Ventspils. One morning a group of sailors came across. I must say that relations with the sailors were not simple and not always peaceful. One of the sailors suddenly rushed towards me and began to choke me. In view of the numerical superiority, it was useless to resist, it remained only to humbly wait for their fate. Four other sailors stood aside and for some reason smiled. Before I realized that my precious life - especially after the war - was not in danger,

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my new epaulettes, which had been carefully adjusted only the day before, were hopelessly crumpled. It was our former penitentiary, the commander of a naval "hunter", who served a fine - for injury or for a term - I don't remember. He was returned to the ship, but he had not yet been restored to the officer rank, and he was in midshipman's shoulder straps. There was no longer any need to talk about freedom of movement. I was "taken under white hands", and our painting group - me in green, the rest in black - dragged me to the pier. The ships were on the other side of Venta. One of the sailors stood on a bench and began waving his arms. I understood - the flag signal alphabet. They noticed something from the ship, "wrote" something in response, quickly lowered the boat, and soon we all found ourselves in a cramped cockpit. The table was already set. What happened next is vague.

G.K. — Have there been cases of violence or robberies of civilians in your penal company?

E.G. — My company was ending the war in the Baltics, and then this land was already considered Soviet territory, and Lithuanians and Latvians were already Soviet citizens, respectively. For this reason, our "criminal company" behaved relatively decently. According to the wartime law, banditry was punishable by execution on the spot. Everyone wanted to live. But there was one shameful incident that tarnished our company. At the very end of the war, our penitentiary, a Georgian named Miladze, raped several women in the farms closest to the location of the company. They caught him after May 9, and instead of a well-deserved "capital measure", he received only eight years in prison. And it was necessary to "put the wall"!

G.K. - Let's say the penal atoned for his guilt with blood and returned to a regular military unit. Did the fact

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his stay in the penal divisions for a further career or awards?

E.G. — They usually returned with a demotion, and sometimes even in rank. Many former penal officers at the end of the war commanded battalions and regiments. I knew these two personally. In rewards for subsequent combat achievements, as a rule, they were limited. There were always enough reinsurers in the headquarters offices. I have heard only about two former penitentiaries who later received the title of Hero of the Soviet Union. This is Karpov and the commander of the sapper battalion from our 51st Army, Iosif Serper. Both received the title of Hero, if I'm not mistaken, only after the third submission to the star of the Hero. There was also, it seems, an artillery sergeant, also a Hero of the Union, who at one time managed to fight in a penal company. Perhaps there were many such people. I do not have complete information on this issue. One thing I know for sure is that this topic has never been touched upon in official sources.

And the officers of the permanent composition of the penal divisions were not spoiled with awards very generously. They write that only one commander of the penal company, Azerbaijani Ziya Buniyatov, became a Hero of the USSR. But there were a few more people. In the award lists, they wrote on them - "commander of a shock battalion" (or company), avoiding the word "penalty". If in the infantry a battalion commander who broke through the fortified defenses of the enemy could immediately be presented with a high award, up to the highest rank, then they looked at us as "experts in breakthroughs". Like, "this is your daily work and front-line share. What else do you want?"...

G.K. - In recent years, so much pseudo-historical "truth" has been written. And already the landing squad of Caesar Kunikov consisted of penalized soldiers. Detachment Olyshan

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sky, landed by troops in Nikolaev, was also declared a penalty. Sasha Matrosov became both a penalty box and a Tatar. But the Seelow Heights were taken by assault battalions, and indeed, the war was won by yesterday's prisoners, driven unarmed against German machine guns. And Rokossovsky is "the country's main penalty box". Who will now tell what really happened?

E.G. - The detachments of Kunikov and Olshansky consisted of volunteer sailors who knew that they were going to almost certain death. By the way, three people from the Kunikovsky battalion moved here for a permanent place of residence in recent years. The address of one of them, Andrei Hirikilis, I will try to get you. If he is still alive, he will tell about this legendary detachment. About the storming of Berlin. Penalty units took part in it. It is a fact. Take the memoirs of division commander Shatilov.

Now about the main thing. There is an opinion that penal units played a decisive role in the war and they are almost the main creators of the Victory. It's a delusion. Yes, the penalty box fought desperately. But the situation was such that it was no easier for ordinary units. The army can occupy along the front, depending on the situation, from several kilometers to several tens of kilometers. In the latter case, the command will not transfer a penal company to the desired sector. The movement of this unusual unit along the front line, in the rear, is fraught with trouble. The "best of the best" were not recruited into penal companies. Quite the contrary. And an ordinary rifle battalion will be assigned to reconnaissance in battle, either fresh or from a neighboring sector, and very rarely the one that occupies the defense here. Pure psychology - a soldier takes root in his trench, in his trench, and he

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it is more difficult to leave the habitable place and rise to the attack. This is taken into account.

Penal companies and battalions played their important role in the war. But the allegations that only penalized soldiers fought at Rokossovsky are nonsense. And they made up no more than one percent of the army.

G.K. - Do you have anything to say about special officers? And about order number 227?

E.G. — There is no need to “demonize” those who served in special departments. Recently, in any movie about the war, except for “August 44”, special officers are shown as sort of sadists, wandering around with a revolver in the rear and looking for which soldier to shoot at the back of the head. You just need to understand that some of the army Chekists and counterintelligence officers fought against their people and are criminal, but the majority did their duty in accordance with the guidelines of that difficult time. You don't understand this now. At the front in the summer of 1942, the remnants of the regiment were taken to the rear. Build- Whether “peace.” The special officer led a soldier I did not know to the middle, guarded by two fighters. I read out the verdict. The soldier was found to be a crossbow. I remember only one phrase from the special officer's speech: “It's better to die from a German bullet than from your own!” They shot this soldier. At the beginning of the war, they did not stand on ceremony for a long time. Let me tell you another tragic incident that happened right before my eyes. You know about Stalin's Order No. 227, the text is familiar to you. It is pointless to argue now whether the order was good or bad. At that moment, necessary. The situation was critical and faith in victory was at the limit. The mortar company commander in our regiment was 22-year-old Alexander Obodov. He was a career officer and before the war managed to graduate from a military school. He knew the business well, the soldier felt sorry for him, and they loved him. Yes, and the commander was brave. I was friends with him. Sasha

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led the company to the front, trying not to lose people, materiel. There were many older soldiers in the company, it was difficult for them to go in the heat with heavy 82-mm mortars on the ridge, they often had to rest. The company lagged behind the regiment for a day. But the war does not regret and does not forgive. We attacked the Germans several times that day and made no progress. I was on the phone when the division commander called. I handed the phone to the regimental commander.

Why aren't you moving forward? the division commander asked. The regiment commander began to explain something.

- Have you shot anyone?

The regimental commander immediately understood everything and after a pause said: “No.”

- Shoot it then! - said the commander. “This is not a union meeting. This is war.

And just thundered the 227th order. In the evening, when it got dark, the battalion and company commanders and political officers were summoned to the regiment commander's NP. They fanned out around. The deputy commander began to make a roll call. After one of the surnames, a voice that had not yet cooled down answered excitedly: “Killed on the way to the NP! Here are the documents! - a hand extended from the trench, and someone silently accepted a bundle of documents. The meeting continued. I had just returned from the front line, the foreman thrust into my hands a pot with some cold brew, and I finished my meal sitting on the ground. Excited voices could be heard from the NP. After the concussion, I did not hear well, I could hardly understand the words. From the NP trench, backing away, Sasha Obodov began to climb the steps. Following him, stepping on him and inflaming himself with anger, appeared with pistols in the hands of the regimental commissar, the senior battalion commissar Fedorenko and the captain-special department, whose name was not preserved in my memory (this was even before the introduction of unity of command in armies,

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then the commissar and the regiment commander had equal rights, the commander had the signature, and the commissar had the seal). "Comrade Commissar! Sasha repeated in despair, not yet believing in what was happening. Comrade Commissar! I've always been a good person!"

Shots rang out. Shielding himself with his hands, Sasha brushed away the bullets as if they were flies: "Comrade Commissar! Tova..."x After the third bullet that hit him, Sasha fell silent in mid-sentence and collapsed to the ground. The very one that I so wanted to protect. He has always been a good man. He was only twenty-two years old.

The Germans continuously illuminated the front line with rockets and spread a multicolored fan of tracer bullets low over our heads. From time to time mines roared dully. Nothing changed. The war continued.

Someone shouted: "To the party meeting!" They crawled around the party organizer. For a long time, without looking at each other, they were silent. The party organizer did not immediately speak. Literally shouted: "Comrade communists! You saw what just happened! It is better to die in battle." This is what was written in the decision: "Fight to the last drop of blood. Die in battle." Special officers and military tribunals shot 150 thousand people. We will never know how many of them are innocent victims. And how many were shot without trial or investigation! How to determine the measure of cruelty that was necessary to win? Is it necessary? Is it always? I do not undertake to determine the measure of cruelty necessary for the Victory. Neither justify nor refute.

## INVOLVEMENT

G.K. — In general, is it necessary to write now the whole bitter and hard truth about the war? E.G. "I don't even know what else to tell you to

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You understand how terrible war can be. How many people have already passed away without telling people what they had to experience without telling their truth about the war. And how many are still alive, but silent, thinking that no one needs it anymore.

My comrade Alexei Dudnev, commander of a machine-gun platoon, was wounded in the head, the bullet hit under the left eye and exited the back of the head, crawled out of the encirclement. He crawled across the battlefield, around his own and others killed. A rare line of people appeared on the horizon. They walked to the front line, bowing from time to time. Orderlies, he thought, and crawled towards them. A pistol shot was heard. Didn't pay attention. There were two more dry pops. I was alert, looked closely. The people were in our uniforms, from the "Azerbaijani" division. And then he realized - marauders! They shoot the wounded and rob the dead. Stay alive after a mortal wound and die at your own hands! What are theirs? They are worse than fascists. Shoot! he thought bitterly, but continued to crawl. We met. Turning his head with difficulty, he asked: "Guys! Miss it." And they missed it! Either they took pity on his youth, or the machine gun - which he still could not use - made an impression, but missed it! Still not believing in his second salvation, he crawled further and crawled to the medical battalion in the morning. The medical battalion was from another division and was not accepted. The front-line soldiers know that in the offensive, the medical battalions, as a rule, accepted the wounded only from their own division and very reluctantly from other formations. There is such a flow of the wounded that they did not have time to treat them. It was terribly insulting and seemed blasphemous, now you can be indignant as much as you like. But that was often the case. They gave Alexei a piece of bread. He could not eat, his mouth almost did not open. I pinched off small pieces,

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pushed through his teeth and sucked. And crawled on. He rested and crawled again. So I crawled to the hospital, where they accepted me and bandaged me. On the fifth day after injury. And this is not fiction.

A soldier of our battalion (I won't give his last name, he went through the war and is probably still alive), a 19-year-old guy. It so happened that the battalion liberated his native village, which was taken without a fight. His house was on the outskirts. By the time he reached the house, the neighbors said that his mother had slept with the Germans and that his fiancée had also been dragged into this filth. The soldier was shaking all over. He went into the house and shot his mother! I wanted to shoot my girlfriend too, but I didn't have time, the battalion commander came into the house on time and did not allow me to kill her. How can we make sense of all this now? Every personal tragedy?

G.K. - Let's touch on the award topic?

E.G. - In 1942, a soldier of our regiment was awarded the medal "For Courage". The entire regiment was gathered for a rally about his award. They began to reward generously only from 1944, and not always according to military merit. And it didn't depend on us at all - they would give an order or a medal, they sent an award list, and then look for fistula, it happened to me more than once. In principle, there has never been any justice in this regard. I saw a soldier after six (!) Wounds with a single medal on his chest. You come to the headquarters - there are solid "iconostases" on tunics. I came to the penal company with two Orders of the Red Star, and in the last front-line year I received the Order of the Patriotic War. Although in the penal company for each attack it was possible to fairly and calmly give an order. I did not chase after awards and did not beg from the authorities. Only once, in 1943, he asked the regiment commander what he heard about the Order of the Red Banner, to which he was introduced, and in response he heard something like: "In the country on

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all of you will soon run out of precious metal." Well, for him, of course, it was enough. I'm the boss and did not lick the boots.

There was a clerk at the headquarters of a certain Pisarenko (full correspondence between the position and the surname), so he destroyed the award list, he did not like my surname. Then he wrote me a letter to the hospital. Repented. He died stupidly, at the end of the war.

And what was given or what was not given - what's the difference now. Jews were often limited in awards, in addition to my own examples, I know many dozens of such cases. In the infantry, unlike in tank or artillery units, anti-Semitism was rampant and flourished. Do not forget one more important detail, I was the son of an "enemy of the people." This was indicated in the officer's personal file. Here, for example, at Grigory Pozhenyan, who was twice nominated for the title of Hero and did not receive this title, on his personal file it was written in red pencil - "mother is a Jewess, father is an enemy of the people." Then such annotation sounded not funny at all ...

G.K. — Do you remember your last battle or the last front-line day?

E.G. "You can't call it a battle, but how I met the last day of the war, I'll tell you now. Courland. It has already been reported that Berlin has been taken. We took a high-rise, we are preparing for an attack, the sappers made passages in the minefields in front of us. Opposite were German pillboxes and four tanks dug into the ground. Three hundred meters to the Germans. The day "did not promise to be pleasant." We look: over the German trenches white flags stagger and disappear. Everyone sighs in disappointment and swears. Suddenly a white flag rose firmly above the parapet. Just in case, we canceled the artillery preparation. No one goes to our trenches, apparently, they are afraid of getting shot in the back.

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love from their own. Everyone looks at me. I was the only one in the company who knew German, and sometimes I had to interrogate prisoners. A fighter who was standing next to me said: "Yes, if anything, we will leave a wet place from them." And they will leave. Such a division. Only I will not see that very wet place. I stand defiantly on the parapet, take off my belt with a pistol, put the machine gun on the ground. I take out a handkerchief, the color of which is vaguely reminiscent of white, and on stiff legs I walk towards the enemy along the cleared path. Silence. The front is frozen. Suddenly steps behind. One of our penalty boxers, a young and healthy guy, caught up with me. We went on together and got to the German defense intact. They went down to the Germans in a trench. And they rally, shout, throw themselves at us. Half of them with signs of the SS troops. Yes, they did. My soldier is nervous, sweat is rolling off him, and I, too, caress the grenade in my pocket. And I think to myself: "It's necessary, on the last day you will have to die so stupidly!" The Germans speak quickly, I can't make out the words from excitement. Brought to oberst. And I have a stupor, except for: "Stalin gut, Hitler kaput," I can't say anything intelligibly. With difficulty I mastered myself and in a commanding voice I declared: "We guarantee life, food, surrender, go out in a column through the passage in the minefield, follow the formation to our location, etc. and so on." Oberst just nods his head, he realized that I am a Jew, he does not humiliate himself before talking to me. Let's go back, all these meters I was waiting for a shot in the back. It worked out. When the Germans went to surrender, the soldiers shouted "Hurrah and hugged. Everyone understood that the war was over for us, and we remained alive!!! The captured Germans were disarmed, "liberated" from the clock and sent

whether further to the rear.

On the occasion of the end of the war, the entire personnel of our company was amnestied.

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G.K. Did you drink a lot at the front? Did the fines get 100 grams of "People's Commissar's"?

E.G. — Like all personnel of the front-line units. In winter, as well as on the offensive, regardless of the season. I didn't drink much at the front. A bottle of vodka was shared with a matchbox placed end to end. Five boxes - the bottle is divided. Fighters often got moonshine. It happened that people unknowingly drink wood alcohol and die in terrible agony. A lot of people died in the war on a "drunken case."

The Germans thoroughly knew our psychology and often, leaving the defensive lines in some settlement, left an untouched tank of alcohol on the railway tracks or a whole distillery. And after a couple of hours they fought off this point again. We already had no one to fight. All were "in the insole." Examples. Ask any veteran. What is worth only the first capture of Shaulyai. But a wild incident occurred at the Popelnya station. They took the station, and there was a tank of alcohol. We began to celebrate military success. A few hours later, a train of German tanks arrived at the station. They calmly unloaded and kicked us out. Our T-34 tanks stood without crews. Tankers fairly took "on the chest." And there were plenty of drunken commanders who decided, "filling their eyes", to be heroic at someone else's expense. I don't know this from Simonov's book; that's how the bosses drove him to storm the skyscraper. It was impossible for the regiment to take this height, and they drove my only company. As usual, with promises: "If you don't take the height, we'll shoot you." I also saw how a drunken general shot the battery commander for daring to object, having received a stupid, disastrous order.

My battalion commander Ivashchuk also died while drunk. I rode a white horse to the front line and began

German

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to cover the mat. The Germans threw a couple of mines, Ivashuk was slightly wounded. If he had been sober, maybe he would have turned around and galloped to the rear, but he continued to shout something to the Germans, threatening their trenches with his fist. The next mine covered him. Ridiculous death...



G.K. — Why do people of your generation, although it sounds strange, call the war years the best time of their lives?

E.G. "For many people of my generation, the war was the best time of our lives. War, with its incredible, inhuman gravity, with its tests of rupture and fracture, with its extreme exertion of physical and moral strength, is still war. And it's not just a longing for a bygone youth. In the war, we could not be replaced. And no one. The feeling of belonging to great, tragic and heroic events was the pride of our life. I knew I needed. Here. Now. At this moment. And no one else.

Interview:

Grigory Koifman. Duel. 2005. October 11. No. 41 (439); the 25th of October. No. 43 (441): | november. No. 44 (442);

November 8th. No. 45 (443); November 22. No. 47 (445).

Gordienko A. EVERY ITS ORDER IS A MEMORY OF THE COMPANY

...Grigory Grigoryevich Vysotsky, perhaps the only one of the front-line soldiers of the Irkutsk region, was awarded the Orders of the Red Banner, Bogdan Khmel'nitsky and Alexander Nevsky. He commanded a penal company at the front.

Lieutenant Grigory Vysotsky arrived in the active army from the Omsk Infantry School, where he completed short-term courses and continued to serve as the commander of a training platoon of these courses, and with the last graduation he went to the front. He appeared at the headquarters of the 70th Army of the 1st Belorussian Front.

Headquarters officers, without hiding a smile, literally watch the efforts with which the two-meter tall lieutenant, almost bent in half, makes his way through the narrow and low door of the dugout.

"Bogatyr," the colonel turned to him in a singsong voice, continuing to leaf through Vysotsky's personal file. — So, a Siberian!

- From the Irkutsk region, from Baikal.

- So, you are appointed commander of a separate penal company.

Vysotsky had already heard about such companies, but he did not even think about the fact that he would have to accept such a company.

Recalling this episode, Grigory Grigoryevich told me this:

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Each of his orders is a memory of the company

— I took over this company. The order must be followed. This was in the early autumn of 1944. And in October the first fight. In the interfluvium of the Vistula, Bug and Nareva, units of the 38th Infantry Division went to seize the bridgehead. On the move, the company entered the breakthrough of the first line of defense of the Germans. One fascist counterattack followed another. The earth shook from the explosions. From left and right, tanks and self-propelled guns fired, aircraft bombed, artillery thundered, submachine gunners scribbled and mortars thumped. Rare hours of calm gave way to more brutal attacks of the enemy.

This was the bridgehead from which the Soviet troops crossed the Vistula in the direction of Warsaw. I will give one episode that characterizes Vysotsky's commanders. At night, he sends two groups of machine gunners around the flanks of the German defense sector. And when they open at the same time

fire, he and the remaining soldiers, taking advantage of the confusion of the enemy, rise to the attack and literally sweep the enemy away.

The foothold was held by series of similar counterattacks. And when the divisions of the 49th Army came to replace, Vysotsky's company withdrew from the battle. According to him, only four remained alive: the signalman, two more soldiers and he, the company commander. Lieutenant Vysotsky was then awarded the Order of Alexander Nevsky.

"That's what a penal company is," says Grigory Grigoryevich, sighing heavily. "Of course, soldiers convicted by a military tribunal and demoted officers, former prisoners atoned for their personal guilt before the state with their blood, many were awarded orders and medals for their courage, and became part of military units.

So it was in subsequent battles in the north of Poland. Colonel-General Popov, commander of the army, personally awarded distinguished soldiers of the newly formed

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the militant penal company of Vysotsky. They were the first to take to the streets of the city of Hoitice, breaking through the German defenses. Senior Lieutenant Vysotsky was awarded the Order of Bogdan Khmelnytsky, third degree. The fighters of his company distinguished themselves in the battles for the city of Sopot, between Danzig and Gdynia. These two seaports of Poland on the Baltic Sea, as fortress cities, did not delay the onslaught of our advancing army for long, but the fighting was heavy. Vysotsky's company skillfully resisted the German counterattacks. Its officers and soldiers repulsed enemy counterattacks one after another. Here he was wounded in the right leg, and on March 27, 1945, the war ended for Grigory Vysotsky. By order of the commander of the 2nd Belorussian Front, for his last battle to liberate Gdynia, Captain Vysotsky was awarded the Order of the Red Banner...

East Siberian truth. No. 24248. 2002. June 20.

Nekrasova M. Atone with blood

A veteran of the Great Patriotic War, retired colonel Ivan Illarionovich Roshchin, fought from August 1941 until the Victory. He served in an artillery regiment, was an agitator. We also know him as a military journalist, first as a correspondent for the army and divisional newspapers at the front, and in peacetime as a special correspondent for the newspaper Trud.

At the front, history was being created, one might say, before our very eyes, and we really wanted to preserve it, convey it to future generations precisely in details, which, as you know, merciless time inevitably erases from memory.

And in those days, when it was a stone's throw "to whom to get the order, well, and to whom to the" tower ", the desperate political instructor Roshchin carried a common notebook in his gas mask bag, where he wrote down the most significant and somehow struck him events of those distant front days.

Once he was caught on this by a counterintelligence officer:

— What do you have there? Come on, show me!

The young officer asked to leave the notebook with him:

- I will not surrender, and if they find notes from the dead, then the Fritz will definitely not benefit from them!

"All right, fight," the "guardian of order" relented for some reason. - But burn the notebook all the same!

But something made Roshchin disobey. And since

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he even started a second notebook with me. These notes already in peacetime formed the basis of Ivan Roshchin's essay books about the heroes of the Great Patriotic War.

Today we asked Ivan Illarionovich to recall the period of the war, when the Motherland and the party ruled him, a young officer, to serve in a penal company, where he was entrusted with the duties of an agitator.

"You have sinned against the Motherland, and your main task is to atone for your guilt with blood!"

The words of the famous Stalinist Order No. 227 are forever etched in the memory of those who went through the Great Patriotic War. Not to mention the people whom the order directly affected. No step back! And other thoughts simply do not arise. And your guilt before the Motherland is such that it can only be washed away with blood...

In the war, as in life, bitter and funny intertwined. But you understand this later, but at first you are rudely pulled out of peaceful life and, unfired, you run into your first attack. The combat path of senior sergeant Ivan Roshchin began in an artillery regiment, where he was a platoon commander. Southern front, terrible battles. There are a lot of enemy tanks, planes are constantly hanging over our heads. The 31st Rifle Division retreated from Taganrog to Rostov-on-Don. Then she launched a counteroffensive and took up her former positions on the Mius River.

"As I remember now," says Ivan Illarionovich, "together with the battalion commander, Major Vasiliev, we are looking through the stereo tube. There is no traffic on the highway, and something is swarming to the left. Let's focus — naked Germans are running around the brick building! Taking advantage of a respite in the fighting, the Germans, exhausted by lice, decided to arrange a bath for themselves. With the help of our gunners "bath"

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turned out bloody. Senior Sergeant Ivan Roshchin was awarded the Order of the Red Star for this operation. At forty-one! Then no one really saw the orders. Approached, embarrassed, shifted from foot to foot, looked at the award. One of the first, not only in the regiment - in the division!

Then there was a retreat to the Caucasus. On the way from Rostov to Bataysk, the Germans bombed like crazy. Severely shell-shocked, Roshchin ends up in a Sochi hospital for several months. In the hospital walls, time flows more slowly, and information from the front beats against the white thickness of the bandages and cannot penetrate into the clouded consciousness. You wake up - and everything is already different, life has gone somewhere forward, changed beyond recognition and changed you.

Leaving the hospital, Roshchin found out that penal companies and penal battalions were being created. The personnel department of the 47th Army was delighted:

- Oh, political instructor, you're here on time! You will go as an agitator to the penal company.

- Here it is! Roshchin thought dejectedly as he stepped out onto the dusty street of Novorossiysk even in winter. He really did not want to carry out this order - after all, he was an artilleryman and dreamed of returning to his regiment. Yes, there was nowhere to go. The penal company was already being formed, and its very name gave rise to unsettling thoughts.

Deserters, alarmists - you can't say anything, a cheerful company! One warmed - at least the command of such a company - not penalized. Commander - as regimental commander, seniority goes - six months in one month. It can be seen that you will have to fight in hot places! He was not mistaken, because that was the concept of the penal company. The company was attached to a rifle division and occupied positions in the mountains northeast of Novorossiysk near a hundred

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threads of Shapsugskaya. At first, the gloomy agitator was greeted warmly, and now he is already walking through the trenches, getting acquainted with the personnel, listening to the first - and immediately difficult - questions. Perhaps the most correct answers to them will be given by the war.

The forty-second year is coming to an end. And now - the first fights next to the penalty boxes. Who were they, these people? As Ivan Illarionovich recalls, for the most part they actually committed military crimes - they deserted during a battle or chickened out at a crucial moment. For example, there was such a "warrior" - senior lieutenant Shleymovich, who managed to run to Baku by car. There, as they say, he was tied up, tried and sent to the Tbilisi prison, from where the penal company received mainly "reinforcements". Sometimes there were two hundred or two hundred and fifty people, two whole battalions. Therefore, a rather large section of the front was assigned to the penalized.

As you know, the place of the penal company during the battle is the front line. A few artillery salvos - and forward, only forward those who have nothing to lose, whom the Germans fear more than fire and often psychologically cannot withstand such an attack - after all, a desperate person is capable of any, the most incredible act. It must have been a sight not for the faint of heart. "... You better chop wood for coffins - penal battalions go into the breakthrough," Vladimir Vysotsky sang decades after the war.

Everything happened during the battle. They took a high-rise - they didn't take it. And everywhere you look - completely dead and wounded. The junior political instructor Roshchin makes his way between them with a tablet in his hand - it is necessary to draw up lists. Criminal records are removed automatically from those killed. Documents for the wounded will be submitted to the division tribunal - the guilt before the Motherland is washed away with blood.

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Once an unusual reinforcement was brought to the penal company. They were sailors from Poti, about thirty people. The company commander used to say to Roshchin:

- Go, Ivan, figure out what kind of audience there is!

This time, the "audience" was really extraordinary. Combat — in the most direct and concrete sense of the word. Returning from another trip, we went on leave to the shore. They commemorated the dead comrades and the sailors did not like the market traders very much - healthy men, whose place in a difficult hour for the Motherland, of course, is not behind the counter, but at the front. Well, the sailors explained this to them in practice, for which they landed under the tribunal - at the suggestion of local authorities. Here the sailors say, yearning:

Give us some real work! What are we - we will sit in the trenches? ..

The penitentiaries were not allowed to go to reconnaissance. And our divisional intelligence could not manage to take the language. The sailors caught fire with this idea - yes, we will attract you - and not one! For several days they studied the location of the enemy, the daily routine of the pedantic Germans. And then they simply "knocked out" them, attacked skillfully and unexpectedly. Many were killed, and five - gagged - were taken to the location of the company. The prisoners were immediately taken by scouts

ki, the division received gratitude, and the penal company ... It is the penal one. Well, at least the sailors were soon released.

The agitator also had to talk with the newly enrolled demoted officers. Colonel, brigade commander received an order to move to the mountains. Some units did not meet the deadlines given by the command. The mountains hide many surprises, and it is extremely difficult to calculate the time of the operation with an accuracy of up to an hour. However,

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her, the tribunal and the penal company were provided to the colonel.

The company commander understood everything correctly:

"It's not easy to raise a colonel!" The front needs it.

And after the next battle, where the colonel proved himself a brave orderly, he was sent home. In the summer of forty-three there was an offensive against Anapa. On the road, clogged with equipment and soldiers, an officer jumped out of the "jeep" and, running up to Captain Roshchin, impulsively hugged him. This COLONEL was grateful.

It came with fines to a joke. In the next replenishment - major, head of the Voentorg. It's no secret that many commanders at the front had PZh - field wives. And it's no secret that they sometimes allowed themselves to be capricious. By order of the commander, the head of the Voentorg sewed his girlfriend chic boots. How not to brag about the renovation before the ladies. As a result, the chief of staff demanded even better boots for his boots. But the major had no more material ... In general, they found a reason and handed over the poor fellow to the tribunal.

Roshchin recalls how the surviving connections of a military merchant in a penal company were used. At the forefront of the salary, of course, there was nowhere to put it. Money accumulated just bags! The company commander says to the major:

"Here's a horse, a bag of money, and empty bags. Go and buy what you can.

And you could have champagne for the holiday, and the then popular canned American sausage, and walnut halva. Every day under bullets - so at least eat and drink before death!

Needless to say, there were such "happy outcomes"

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units. And sometimes life set tasks that even experienced warriors found it difficult to solve. In one of the new additions, there were seven girls - nurses. Everyone retreated, and they fled along with everyone else until they were stopped by a detachment and into the penal company. The commander, a wise man in years, only sighed heavily:

- Survived ... Women - in a penal company. Their business is not to fight, but to give birth.

We decided to do everything to make the girls come out alive. Their first battle was near the village of Abinskaya. Ivan Roshchin as an agitator in front. Covers them along with others.

- I remember her name - her friends called her Galka. Turned her, poor, leg, so much so that it's not what to go - could not crawl.

Ivan put the girl on his shoulders and dragged her back for more than a kilometer until she handed over to the orderlies. Jackdaw, while she was conscious, experienced everything:

- Tell me, now I will no longer be considered a penalty box?

And one of them still did not save ...

The girls were brave and proud. Against their background, cowardly soldiers looked especially disgusting. One of them, sitting in the bushes and firing into the air during the attack, was almost shot by the company commander himself.

The war was terrible. Stalin's Order No. 227 was ruthless. And yet... If the Motherland is in danger, not a step back.

Warrior of Russia. 2004. May. No. 8.

#### Barabolya P.D. PENAL CASES LEFT INTO THE BATTLE

All of us, from the "simple sailor" (P.D. Barabolya fought as part of the Volga military flotilla. - Comp.) to the front commander, then lived by order No. 227 of the People's Commissar of Defense I.V. Stalin. It is now widely and well known as a historical document, which soldered the will and skill of the defenders of the city on the Volga into a single irresistible force with its strict requirements. In firm, indisputable paragraphs of the order, there was a short, like a shot, and capacious command: "Not a step back!" In the troops, it instantly acquired a living, concrete and merciless meaning: "There is no land for us beyond the Volga!" The words from "Different Days of the War" by Konstantin Simonov come to mind, which very accurately defined the very essence of Stalin's one-of-a-kind order: "In my opinion, the main thing is that the people, the people (the order was read to all the troops) courageously right in the eyes of the whole terrible and bitter truth about the abyss, on the brink of which we then sunk."

As it often happened before, and it often happens now, we first issue circulars, and then we select the material basis for filling. Something similar happened with the formation of penal units.

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The most significant omission, in my opinion, was the lack of a status, a legal provision that determines the special (by its unusualness) place of penal units. Here, other zealous bosses could humiliate the human dignity of the "Penalty Box" with impunity, throw people to certain death, not always caused by the interests of achieving military success: "Penalty boxes!.."

Then the appointments began to be announced. The company looked like a rather impressive subdivision in terms of the number of personnel: it consisted of five platoons, each with 60-70 people. The company commander, senior lieutenant Pyotr Matveev, was given the rights of a battalion commander. In the staff of the platoons, given their large number and the special category of privates, there were deputy commanders for political affairs.

One by one, my colleagues were appointed to positions. Finally the turn came to me.

— Lieutenant Barabol! You will command a machine gun platoon.

— Yesty

Immediately figured out: what kind of machine guns could they be? Surely the Maxim easel machine gun, which has long declared itself in battles, and possibly the manual Degtyarevsky machine gun, is also a reliable machine. As it turned out later, I was not mistaken. The platoon was given three "machine guns", one hand and six anti-tank rifles. Quite good equipment!

When appointing a deputy for political affairs to my platoon, there was an unexpected hitch. When senior lieutenant Georgy Shebunyaev was named to this position, he, not a newcomer to the front, lost his restraint. Turning purple, he hurriedly got up, suddenly somehow transformed and broken:

- Comrade divisional commissar, anywhere,

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Just not for the penalty box. For what? Better in any other company. At least to the very front.

He was sitting next to me, and in my hearts I tugged at his tunic sleeve, exhaled: "What are you talking about? Sit down, shut up..."

Shokhin (deputy head of the political department of the flotilla.—Comp.) abruptly stopped the senior lieutenant, who was suddenly faint-hearted:

- If you don't become a political officer, you will become a penalty box yourself. This I promise you firmly.

No, Shebunyaev never celebrated the coward afterwards, although our platoon, like the whole company, sometimes got into such troubles that we never met in the most "twisted" plots of adventure stories "about the war". It's just that under the influence of the past stories and tales about penal companies, their supposedly one hundred percent doom, something broke over the person, and momentary weakness splashed out. Be that as it may, later Zhora Shebunyaev and I got along quite well.

Soon, we, the newly-minted commanders, including those who were separated (they were neither convicted nor penalized), received subordinates. It was not far from Akhtubia, in the village of Kilyakovka. The beautiful apple orchard, where the transfer of people took place, was fragrant with long-ripened fruits. And although battles were in full swing on the other side of the Volga, and in the evenings the distant Stalingrad sky was melted by flashes of conflagrations, it was still relatively calm here.

The first acquaintance with the penalty box made a depressing impression. Of course, outwardly they were quite, as they say, normal guys or young, up to thirty years old, men - smiling and wary, gloomy and sly. Most of them were wearing military uniforms. Well, just write with

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other illustrations for the combat charter! However, the "track record" of these people looked completely different. Military tribunals for military or criminal offenses "measured out" severe punishments for them - from five years to the death penalty. There were seven of the last in the platoon. There was something to think about.

As I now clearly understand, at that time, my former teacher and my military political officer Shebunyaev judged very correctly, accepting the information received only as preliminary information. "Life, battles will show," we reasoned, "who is who." In the depths of their souls, they understood that, probably, not all of these criminals maliciously went against the law and the oath. Perhaps someone was brought to the dock by an oversight, unfortunate blunders in

deeds, or even just weakness of character. Nevertheless, we were aware that among these sixty people (and there were more than three hundred in the company) there were certainly those who could not at all be called angels. Which, by the way, was confirmed very soon.

Just a week later, when we were just looking at newcomers, our separate penal company was literally shocked by the report of a severe emergency. Two people from the platoon of senior lieutenant Vasily Chekalin, pretending to be such simpletons, asked for a visit to elderly people who lived on the outskirts of Kilyakovka. After a short acquaintance, they killed the old man, raped his 12-year-old granddaughter, and threw him and her grandmother into the basement, blocking the entrance with junk. Then the inveterate criminals (the name of one of them, a hefty and impudent fellow, I remember - Nikitin) committed a pogrom in the courtyard of the unfortunate people.

An experienced investigator quickly got on the trail of the bandy

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comrade A speedy and fair verdict was passed against them by the visiting session of the military tribunal: "They were shot."

Rear-Admiral Bondarenko, a member of the Military Council of the Volga Flotilla, who specially arrived to us on this unusual occasion, addressed the hushed formation of the people of the entire company present at the public execution, and delivered an angry speech. There is no need to retell it. I will only say that, as it seemed to me, everyone, without exception, was ready to carry out the sentence personally. This, however, was done by a special detachment of the NKVD. When his fighters took their rifles at the ready, Nikitin could not stand it. Collapsed to his knees, this thug begged to have mercy on him, repented of his deed, swore that he was ready to go even now into the thick of battle, even into hell. Shots interrupted belated spells.

In my twenty-three years, I had seen death in the face, I saw how people die. How many times the heart sank at the same time! But the public execution of two bandits did not arouse the slightest compassion.

Somehow, the attitude of people to the service began to change. The number of violations of discipline decreased, [former] sailors began to treat their classes more diligently. And that was our first priority. And for good reason. For other machine guns, anti-tank rifles were unfamiliar. I had to explain the basics and wisdom of owning weapons, to teach everything that is indispensable in battle. It should be noted that it was not necessary to particularly convince the subordinates of the common army truths. It is understandable. Who would like to become a target on the battlefield! The sailors and foremen, moreover, were well aware that they, the penalized, would certainly be thrown into the most dangerous areas, where only their own combat skills could become a guarantee of survival.

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Be that as it may, in the two weeks that we were allowed to form and some additional training of personnel, I learned a lot about my new subordinates and was finally convinced: no, they are not lost people.

In this regard, the fate of a boy from the Tambov region, Nikolai Shcherbakov, seems to me typical. We platoons were supposed to have orderlies. Clearly, not in order to clean boots or inflate the samovar. The combat situation required live operational communication with neighbors, a quick reaction to the emerging situation. To carry out such and other, sometimes unpredictable tasks, a brave, quick-witted and reliable person was needed in all respects. Shcherbakov is a strong man, a peasant son, an intelligent anti-tank man, according to my observations,



well suited to the role of an orderly. At first, however, he was held back by an important circumstance - he was sentenced, as a deserter, to be shot. And what if, using some "freedom" when executing an order, being out of control over the location of the unit, he first waved somewhere in the rear, and then to his native Tambov region?

And his sincere repentance was remembered. "I committed a great stupidity in my youth, comrade commander. I will never forgive myself," Shcherbakov often lamented on those cold November nights when I found myself next to him in the trench. "After the injury, on a visit at home, one sorceress bewitched me, I didn't have the strength and mind to get rid of her spell in time. The month was not in the unit. And now - a deserter, a tower ... But that's okay, I'll still prove that I can correct mistakes ... "

He has proven this many times. He constantly rushed to where the lives of the fighters hung in the balance and where the fire of his anti-tank rifle turned out to be the best

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By the way. With great respect and warmth, I remember Nikolai Shcherbakov also because he twice averted trouble from me - he covered himself when, in the midst of the battle, we fell under the destructive artillery and mortar shelling of the Germans. But the desperate guy did not save himself.

And here's what's curious: during almost six months of commanding the penitentiaries, I don't remember a case when someone deserted from the company, ran away from the front line. They may object: they say, try to escape if there are detachments in the rear. But, firstly, I don't remember a case where I happened to see the notorious barrier somewhere. And secondly, I am firmly convinced that after all, the actions of these people who found themselves at the front were driven by the feeling of their involvement in the holy cause of defending the Motherland. Having once stumbled, they tried with all their behavior to wash away the "dark spot" from themselves, albeit at the cost of their own blood, and often even their lives.

In fairness, it must be said that the cases of those who washed away the guilt with "first blood" were considered very quickly. Their convictions were expunged without delay, and after hospitals or medical battalions they never returned to our 610th penalty area.

It was as if the officers who commanded the units of the penalty box were not forgotten either. A month of service was counted as six months. Early promotion of titles, generous rewards, special rations, and other things of the same vein were provided for. Basically, many promises remained on paper. The "special ration", for example, was remembered for frozen canned food and daily pea soup (I still have a strong aversion to this respected dish). But all this, of course, is trifles. You could put up with the fact that you were passed over by the award, forgot about the timely assignment of the title. And indeed, before

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Was it really when the fate of the Motherland was being decided near Stalingrad!

But the thoughtless, dismissive attitude towards people could not be justified by anything. This happened near Starodubovka.

The Germans fortified the village thoroughly. They blocked all approaches to their front line with multi-layered fire, densely dotted with anti-personnel and anti-tank mines. The slightest suspicion of an attack on our part caused the Germans to take the most decisive action. It was quite obvious even to a person who was not very experienced in military affairs that to take possession of such a heavily fortified stronghold without its comprehensive preliminary "treatment"

just unthinkable, throwing people at him is sheer madness. Nevertheless, we received an order: "Take Starodubovka."

It was an unusually cold winter for the area. All around, as far as the eye could see, there was deep snow, and this created an additional difficulty, fettered the maneuver. The Germans let us in about two hundred meters and hit us with all their guns. The wounded and the dead immediately appeared, and we only just moved from our "familiar" places. A new attempt to move forward cost several more human lives. Here it would be necessary to stop the inappropriate undertaking - an attack without thorough artillery preparation. But we were pushed forward again and again. In one of these senseless throws, mortar fire covered us, and I only heard Shcherbakov, who was not far from me, gasp. He remained lying on the crimson snow, struck down by a fragment on the spot.

In that inglorious battle, when, by the way, I received a slight wound in the arm, but remained in the ranks, almost a third of the platoon died near Starodubovka, and not

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having mastered it. Many of those who, long ago, in previous battles, by their courage, loyalty to military duty, have earned the right to be rehabilitated even without "first blood", died. The names of these guys come to mind: Blinov, Babenko, Plotnikov, Nikiforov... Can you name them all?

Meanwhile, when Operation Koltso to encircle and destroy a 300,000-strong German group in the Stalingrad region was successfully completed, our troops had a sufficient number of various military equipment and weapons, including the famous Katyushas. So there were every opportunity to avoid unnecessary sacrifices. As it was, for example, during the capture of the same village of Elkhi. Then our attack was preceded by a fairly reliable art preparation. Dozens of guns and mortars unleashed devastating fire on well-reconnoitered enemy positions. After that, the tanks moved forward, and already in the wake of their caterpillars, the 610th separate penalty area rushed to the enemy trenches. The enemy was demoralized and quickly retreated, having suffered significant losses. We won the battle practically without loss of life.

I will not forget one battle with the Nazis, when Elkhi and other settlements on the near approaches to Stalingrad, which we had conquered, were already behind us. The village of Peschanka and the height leaning against it with a mark of 130.6 turned out to be a hard nut to crack on the way. Even before the fighting, the village was completely inconspicuous: perhaps I wouldn't have smoked a hand-rolled cigarette, passing it from end to end. Now only chimneys and trees crippled by ruptures remained here at all. But the Germans fortified Peschanka and that nondescript skyscraper in accordance with all the rules of tough defense. Here and there the overlapping of bunkers bulged, in the trenches, guessing

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artillery positions were lost, mines seemed impassable, according to reconnaissance fields.

We tried to take this line on the move, without careful preparation and fire support. Did not work out. They just suffered unjustified losses. I had to start all over again. A few hours before our new attack (it was January 22, when there were literally a few days left before the complete collapse of the Germans near Stalingrad), I, hiding behind the beam of the trench, peered for a long time at the vague outlines of the German front line. And then I naively thought: maybe they will surrender without a fight, at the mercy of the winners, because it is already quite obvious that they will not get out of the "cauldron" in any way? But the enemy, of course, did not even think about

such a turn of events. It was a dead night. The "neutral" zone was continuously illuminated by rockets, torn wisps of smoke were stretching from somewhere, gunfire was incessantly thundering. And it was clear that the opposing side would not leave here so easily, would not humbly lay down their arms.

The frosts were getting stronger - the thermometers were huddled at the forty-degree mark. When the dim moon peeped through the smoky gaps, it seemed to be icy from the unbearable cold. Not to say that we were dressed "for the season." Liquid overcoats and tarpaulin boots turned out to be completely unreliable protection from the January cold, and this did not give vigor to the penalty box. Nevertheless, all of them, feeling a quick victory, were eager to fight.

After reliable artillery preparation, we stormed the Peschanka, and then the height of 130.6. And if I were then asked which of my subordinates especially distinguished myself, I would, without hesitation, name all of them without exception. True, from the best I would single out the best - machine gunner Dmitry Ageev.

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He worked hard with his "maxim". Already a middle-aged fighter (he was, it seems, over forty) at one stage of the battle rescued the entire company. At the most critical moment, when the Germans sensed a weakness on our left flank, on my orders he quickly advanced to the dangerous sector and immediately opened fire. The Germans tried to suppress our firing point, but Ageev did not flinch. Somewhat later, when both Peschanka and the height were in our hands, we saw the corpses of Nazi soldiers, Ageev could safely attribute a large number of them to his combat account. Many Germans were captured, we took a lot of captured weapons. However, they themselves suffered hard: only 22 people remained in my platoon. This is more than fifty!

At the very end of December 1942, our company was withdrawn to the second echelon - to be replenished and put in order after heavy fighting. Soon an unusual message spread: guests came to us to congratulate us on the New Year, 1943. The "guests" turned out to be two schoolgirls aged 12-14. To this day, I can't imagine how they managed to get from Beketovka to the area that remained a war zone. To all of us, both the penalized and the commanders, they said some kind, unusual words, wished victory, long life and everything else that their glorious children's hearts prompted them. Then our charming guests presented us with New Year's gifts: bags of self-garden and potato pies. This, apparently, was all that the front-line Beketovka could send children with. How many years have passed since that distant time, but every time my memory resurrects a touching, unforgettable meeting, tears well up in my eyes.

The Germans retreated to Stalingrad, and for its southern outskirts we again had to fight not for life, but

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death. The company soon found itself close to the department store, around which, as is well known, fierce fighting broke out. Later, on the last day of January 1943, we saw a picture about three hundred meters away that became truly historic. In the ring of our fighters, holding their machine guns at the ready, groups of prisoners are moving dejectedly. Nazi generals and officers, as well as soldiers. Later it became known that General Field Marshal Friedrich Paulus himself was in one of these groups.

This episode has become symbolic. He, as it were, fixed the end of the Stalingrad epic. The remnants of our company, after arriving in the Moscow region, were transferred to other, "normal" units. Sailor officers were recalled to the naval semi-crew, which

was then housed in the current Moscow school named after Zoya and Alexander Kosmodemyansky. The 66th brigade was reorganized into the 11th Guards Naval Infantry Brigade.

Those battles were difficult and terrible, but not a single commander of our company, except for Captain Matveev, was awarded a single order. Only in 1944, for participation in the Battle of Stalingrad, I was awarded the Order of the Patriotic War [-th degree.

Barabolya P.D. Penalties went into battle. // In the book "Living memory. The Great Patriotic War: the truth about the war. In 3 volumes. T. 1. M., 1995. S. 354-364.

Honey S. GO GOOD LORD, STOP LIES

... My life has developed in such a way that I have, to some extent, a personal relationship with the pathologically false series "Cadets", "Penal Battalion", as well as with such a phenomenon, speculatively played by all the media, as detachments. But in order. In 1942, the military enlistment office in the city of Sulak, Saratov Region, I was drafted into the Red Army and sent to study at the Simferopol Rifle and Mortar School, evacuated from the Crimea to the city of Balakovo in the same Saratov Region. So I became a cadet, which is scornfully narrated in the series, not by chance released on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the Victory. For 6 months we studied in the difficult conditions of a small town, which was forced to accept a school. And it should be noted that Balakovo at that time, a city without a railway, largely depended on navigation along the Volga. The river freezes from frost - there are problems with the supply. And the military school, the cadets needed a lot of things. However, difficulties were overcome, although there were also difficult times. But everyone understood the situation - heavy defensive battles for Stalingrad were going on nearby, and sometimes fascist planes dropped bombs on Balakovo as well.

Nevertheless, we studied military affairs, a lot of attention was paid to shooting and tactical prepare

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Calm down, gentlemen, stop lying

trade, knowledge of the material part of small arms, mortars, drill, political training. Great importance was attached to the study of charters. The requirements of the officers' teachers to us, the cadets, were strict. They demanded knowledge. Calculations for firing mortars, for example, had to be done quickly, in the mind. The discipline was also very strict. Everyone understood that officers were being trained here, albeit junior ones, but officers. Having become a cadet in the autumn, by the middle of spring we were dressed in a new officer's uniform and we were announced that we had graduated from the school. All of us were promoted to the rank of junior lieutenants, given shoulder straps with one star, and sent to a reserve officer regiment not far from the Tatishchevo station, from where the active armies drew platoon commanders — mortars, heavy machine gunners, and construction workers. And very quickly from the reserve regiment I got to the front in the 129th rifle division, in honor of which the very first salute was fired in Moscow for the capture of Orel and which was awarded the title of Orlovskaya. The division is also famous for the fact that, being created in the most difficult time to defend Moscow, it took part in the historic parade on Red Square on November 7, 1941, as evidenced by my senior comrades and documents stored in the division's museum. . I was proud that I was lucky to fight in this division until the end of the war, fighting with it to Berlin. So every cadet-graduate along the prescribed path passed his honest military path in this difficult war.

We, young officers, members of the Komsomol, had nothing to do with what is shown on today's TV shows - I think, young people who have no idea what war is and, I think, have not even visited the current "hot spots". But, having settled down for large

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money, quietly lie, insulting those who in their years studied military affairs and went to the front to fight the enemy. Many of them died, not even imagining that such an unjust, terrible time would come when their peers of today would dare to insult and desecrate their heroic path. And I am sure that they will be charged for lying, for insulting honest and heroic people who liberated their homeland from fascism. And then let them not make excuses that they were only following orders and do not bear any responsibility. You, former Komsomol members and communists, will bear responsibility for what you have done now!

My first appointment in the 129th division was as a platoon commander in a penal company. My service in a penal company has nothing to do with what is shown in the series "Penal Battalion", condemned by everyone who fought, who really knows what a penal company and a penal battalion are. And the aforementioned series, in its vileness, stupidity, inconsistency with what was, has no analogues. Penal companies and penal battalions appeared in accordance with the formidable order No. 227 "Not a step back" of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief Stalin, after the defeat of the Germans near Moscow. And its necessity was dictated by the fact that some units, formations, lulled by successes, lost their fighting enthusiasm, vigilance and began, under pressure from the enemy, who was still very strong, to leave their positions, to retreat. And in accordance with the order, penal companies were created for privates and sergeants who committed cowardice and other crimes, and penal battalions were created for officers who were guilty of a number of military and other crimes.

In our 63rd Army, Colonel General Kolpakchi, there was one such penal battalion, to which General

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attached special importance. But in this battalion there was no such rabble as shown in the movie, there were no students who came from nowhere, and there were no any punks shown in the television series. And it has never happened that soldiers or officers, let the penalists who had to go into battle in the most difficult areas, would not be dressed, shod, fed. And there were no such idiots - KGB political officers, also shown in films.

In penal companies and battalions, I know from my own experience that there was no cruel treatment of subordinates. Cruelty could backfire, especially in combat. I declare with all responsibility that there has never been assault, disrespectful attitude towards the penalty box, which had to pass a severe test by fire and, quite possibly, by death, in order to cleanse oneself, one's conscience, one's honor before relatives and friends from sticky prefixes "penalty box". I went into battle with them and saw with what fury they went to the enemy. And I am proud that I was not mistaken in them. And they treated me with respect. After the very first battles, having shown courage and steadfastness, they were transferred to normal units. There were wounded and dead. Eternal memory to them!

And penal officers, as a rule, in battle showed their dashing, courage, realizing that this is the only chance to cleanse themselves of filth. The film epic "Penal Battalion", I repeat, was met with indignation by those who fought and know the truth, and those who write about it with delight, insulting those who fought, do not hesitate to spit in the soul of old warriors, again on the eve of the 60th anniversary of the Great Victory. A particularly enthusiastic review of this dirty concoction was given in the newspaper "Culture" No. 39 of October 7, 2004 by Maxim Gureev. He begins his review like this: "But, probably, this is how the war

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whether in that war - one rifle per platoon of tattered, half-starved penalists, sadists from the special department of the NKVD, senseless raids behind enemy lines, from which no one returned,

student volunteers and criminals”, etc. “And all this happened in a country where one half was imprisoned, and the other half was guarding...” Truly, for such schizoid delirium, M. Gureev should be given an urgent ticket to a clinic for the mentally ill, always in a separate ward. And if during the war - then in the same penal battalion, about which he writes. He does not deserve a better fate. But while he is in the Kultura newspaper, I would like him to explain why student volunteers (volunteers!) were sent to the penal battalion. For what? For what sins? And further. If one half of the population was sitting, and the other half was guarding, then who fought, who created the best weapons for those times (tank "T-34", "Katyusha", aircraft "Il-2", "Yak" and Tupolev, beautiful submachine guns and machine guns, which after the battle of Moscow almost everywhere replaced rifles)? Who smashed the enemy from many thousands of barrels of guns and mortars, who created tank and aviation armies, which, together with combined arms, having won historic victories not only near Moscow, but also near Leningrad, breaking the blockade on the Kursk Bulge, in Operation Bagration “in Belarus, during the crossing of the Dnieper and in a number of major battles, they liberated Ukraine, liberated Poland, almost all European countries, beat the Nazis in East Prussia, in Germany and hoisted the Red Banner of Victory over the Reichstag? Do the liars from the newspaper Kultura know that from such (not fully named) grandiose battles-victories, after which Germany drastically surrendered, lost power and could not fully recover, the Great Victory was achieved? Our allies, the USA and Eng

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liya - do you hear, Gureev? — they do not have a single victory to their credit, equal in its military strategic importance to those victories won by the Soviet troops and the best weapons in the world. And this is a historical fact. And the operations were developed by outstanding commanders, the General Staff and Headquarters under the leadership of I.V. Stalin. And that same other half, which, according to Gureev, “guarded”; It turns out that she worked in factories, sowed and harvested grain, fed the people and the army, taught children and students for free, treated the population for free and looked after the wounded. And she built. Yes Yes! Even the subway...

How long will the universal lie continue, which is gaining momentum as the great date approaches? Lies from almost all "boxes", from almost all radio channels, on the pages of the vast majority of Russian newspapers. But the 60th anniversary of the Great Victory is approaching every day. I wonder what they will show and say a few days before and during the anniversary? It is safe to say that the same journalists, like Gureev, will begin to falsely admire those who were vilified in every possible way yesterday. Unctuous words will appear: “You are our saviors, liberators, you are our pride” and something else like that. But not once, but many times over the course of many years, having lied or insulted, whoever believes you ... But they will be false - they will be ordered to do so. For them there is nothing sacred, for them empty words are the good of the Fatherland, the good of the people, respect for their country, for the older generation of people who won fascism. They only want money. A lot of money... Dear, brave veterans who shed their blood on the battlefields, survived a terrible war. Don't trust them, they are lying!

Soviet Russia. 2005. March 19. No. 36-37 (12661).

Gavrilenko A. TO STAY ALIVE

NEW GENERATIONS LEARN ABOUT THE HARD TRUTH OF THE GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR FROM VLADIMIR KARPOV'S NOVEL

Hero of the Soviet Union Vladimir Vasilievich Karpov is a front-line soldier, military intelligence officer, the most famous military writer, laureate of State and international literary awards. During the Great Patriotic War, he participated in the capture of 79 German "languages" - a kind of combat record of Soviet intelligence officers. And his works, including the famous novels "Eternal Battle", "The Commander", "Marshal's Baton", the trilogy "Marshal Zhukov", "Generalissimo", keep the reader in suspense from the first to the last page,

encourage new generations to think again and again about the origins of the greatness of the feat of the Soviet soldier. And where and how was the character of the author himself forged?

— Vladimir Vasilyevich, Victory Day is one of our brightest holidays. In a bloody battle with fascism, we defended the freedom and independence not only of our own, but of the peoples of all Europe. It is not in vain that there are still disputes about how our country survived, withstood the greatest test, which turned out to be beyond the strength of many other states. Where did it come from?

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What were the pre-war years like for you, for example? After all, it was not the easiest time for the country?

- In the early twenties, when I was born, life was difficult. In the hungry year of 1927, my parents, under the impression of Neverov's novel "Tashkent - the city of bread," moved to Central Asia. So my childhood and school years were spent in Tashkent. Although it turned out to be not so "bread": it was also not easy there.

Almost all my further life turned out to be connected, one way or another, with the army. The school I was assigned to was located next to the Tashkent military school, many children of commanders went to it (officers were not yet called officers then). I was friends with them, I visited a military town. I got especially close acquainted with Yuri Petrov, the son of the head of the school, brigade commander Ivan Efimovich Petrov, to whom my book "The Commander" is dedicated. By the way, already in those years

write poetry.

- But you did not become a poet, although at first you had such a dream. But how did the decision to go on the military path ripen?

— The image of a military man was then very attractive among the people. And I grew up healthy, went in for boxing and even won some kind of championship among beginners. When I was at the school, I watched the cadets. Young, beautiful, cheerful guys. They were taught to walk with a bayonet, to overcome an obstacle course. Of course, I was drawn to it. Yes, and brigade commander Petrov, when he met with him, persuaded me: "Volodya, you are a strong, strong guy. You'll make a great leader." In a word, he entered the school in 1939. Thus began my military life. The harsh regime, physical activity helped in boxing: I became the champion of the Central Asian Military District, I was included in the national team

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Uzbekistan. And in 1940 he won the title of champion at the Central Asian boxing championship among civil clubs...

- And suddenly a sharp turn in fate ... Arrest ... How did this happen?

"Everything seemed to be going well. I was a cadet, a sports guy, I wrote poems that were printed by the district newspaper. But poets love to be original. Everything should be different for them than for others. Including thoughts. It seemed to me then that with the growth of Stalin's authority, the people began to forget Lenin. And I had a special, warm attitude towards his image. The ubiquitous portraits and busts of Joseph Vissarionovich only annoyed me. At self-training among cadets, he said more than once: "Well, why did they completely forget Lenin? All Stalin yes Stalin, and yet during the revolution he was not the second person after Lenin. Actually, he didn't say anything bad. Stalin did a lot of good, good deeds, but blocking Lenin with Stalin is not good.

However, for that time it was a crime. And the informers among my classmates, of course, reported where they should. On February 23, 1941, graduation was to take place. We have already sewn a beautiful lieutenant's uniform. I dreamed of becoming a kind of brave lieutenant, and just before graduation, I was arrested under a very serious article: anti-Soviet agitation, enemy of the people. The Tribunal of the Central Asian Military District sentenced him to corrective labor in Tavdinlag. And I went to logging in this very Tavda, in the far North, in the taiga, where, as the song says, "the sleepers have run out, and there are no rails." That's where the war found me. Order No. 227 "Not a Step Back" was signed in 1942 on my birthday, July 28.

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- You had a chance to fight in a penal battalion. Everything there was approximately the same as shown in the film "Penal Battalion", which was released several years ago on our screens?

— For some reason, it is believed that penal companies and battalions came only from order No. 227. In fact, they existed before the war, in peacetime. Soldiers convicted of any crimes were sent there. As for the film, its creators, unfortunately, did not get acquainted with the documents that determined the organization of penal units during the war years. And, it seems, they did not consult with specialists. What they show in this series, basically, unfortunately, does not correspond to front-line reality. The order on the creation of such units states that penal battalions are made up only of convicted and demoted officers. Commanders are appointed from career officers. The film also shows a penal battalion, in which criminals, political prisoners, and privates who have been at fault are gathered. This was not and could not be.

"Vladimir Vasilyevich, but you yourself ended up in the penalty box from the camp, being a political prisoner..."

- That's another matter. The rank-and-file, as well as criminals, political prisoners who expressed a desire to fight, were sent to separate penal companies. Such companies were not included in the penal battalion, but were attached to rifle regiments. For example, I fought in the 45th separate penal company on the Kalinin Front. It was formed in November 1942 from prisoners who were released voluntarily to go to the front.

How did you get into it? I wrote letters from the camp to Kalinin that I was almost a commander, an athlete, a young man and I wanted to defend the Motherland. And then one day at the end

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In 1942, when the Battle of Moscow had already died down, and the Battle of Stalingrad was in full swing, a list of prisoners arrived at the camp, whom the command sent to the front. My last name was also on the list. They called me to the watch, where some rank from the NKVD entered personal data into empty forms. I was given a certificate: "Release Vladimir Vasilievich Karpov from custody and send him to the front as part of a penal company. If it does not justify itself in battles, serve out the remaining term after the end of the war." This is an interesting wording.

With these references on the very first night on the front line, many people crawled to the Germans. And there they were welcomed with open arms. Imagine, for my "free-thinking" the Central Asian Tribunal ranked me among the enemies of the people! The investigator told me that I insulted the leader of the people and the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, sowed doubts among the cadets that this was a crime. Meanwhile, this rank in the rear, who came up with such a wording, was the real enemy. Because of these of our guys, German reconnaissance schools and sabotage detachments were recruited, the Vlasov army was created.



I, along with everyone who was released from Tavdin Lag, was sent near Gorky, to the Gorokhovets military camps, where our penal company was formed. Here for a month we were taught how to use weapons. They trusted me to be an instructor, because I knew the rifle and machine gun very well. After the expiration of the period allotted for this course, the young soldier was given a uniform - the same as for all Red Army soldiers, only washed, not new. In the regulation on the penal companies there were harsh words: "Atone for the guilt with blood." This means that in order to have a criminal record removed, a former prisoner must either be seriously wounded or killed. And some

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commanders, especially of the first penal companies, understood this literally, sending their companies practically to the slaughter: without tanks, artillery preparation, without any support. Our company, consisting of 198 people, was sent to the Kalinin Front, near the town of Bely. After the first battle, 9 fighters remained in it. The company only managed to run to the wire. But I wasn't even hurt.

In the next battle, after the reorganization, we received some fire support. We burst into the trench, started hand-to-hand combat, captured the position, the task was completed. After a while we look - again alone. No attack from the right or left. Then one German tank came out against us and started shooting point-blank. The result was the same as the first time.

- And how long did you have to be a penalty box?

- Three times I was in hand-to-hand combat ... And in the end I was transferred from the penal company to the reconnaissance of the 629th regiment ...

Military industrial courier. 2007. May 9-15. No. 17 (183).

Savchin D. THE PENAL CASES DID NOT SCREAM "Hurrah!"

... For a long time I tried to find people, or at least one person, who went through the hell of penal companies and penal battalions. He asked historians, including the military, was interested in veteran organizations. . Alas... And only recently, in a conversation with my friends, I heard: are you interested in the subject of fines? There is such a person. Our former teacher...

I am grateful to brothers Pavel and Alexander Stelmakh, who introduced me to the candidate of technical sciences, associate professor of the Kiev State International University of Civil Aviation, former platoon commander of the 322nd separate army penal company Mikhail Grigoryevich Klyuchko, an interview with which and I suggest to readers.

- Mikhail Grigorievich, where did the war find you?

— Our family lived in Kyiv. In 1939, after graduating from the 7th grade of a secondary school, I entered the special-purpose artillery school, which was located on the territory of the current University of Physical Education. When the war began, we cadets were taken to summer camps near Brovary. They walked, as expected, in uniform, observing all the established insignia. They dug anti-tank ditches, built various defense structures near Kiev. From to

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At the beginning of the mobilization, those who were born in the first half of 1924 were taken to artillery schools, and those who were born in the second half, including me, were sent home.

The institution where my father worked had to be evacuated to Astrakhan. We decided to go with the whole family. In Astrakhan, he got a job as a motorist at a fish factory. When the German air force

began massive bombing of oil storage facilities, the Volga was on fire in the literal sense of the word. Despite the protests of my mother (my father had already gone to the front at that time), I decided to leave as a volunteer. Our 159th rifle brigade, formed exclusively from my peers (the rank and file was born in the 24th year, and the command staff was born on the 23rd), was sent to the Stalingrad front. I was not yet 17. By the way, after the war, it was calculated that out of every 10 people born in the 23rd-24th year, only one remained alive ...

In what direction did your division fight?

- We took the first battle on the southern flank of the Stalingrad Front. Then there were battles in the Salsky steppes, near Bataysk, Rostov, on the Miuss front and the approaches to the Crimea. I was sent to the front-line junior lieutenant school in Novocherkassk near Rostov. I studied there all winter and received the rank of second lieutenant. By that time I had a good training as an artilleryman, I was a gunner, but I was sent to the infantry. He was assigned to the 197th reserve regiment, which was part of the 4th Ukrainian Front and was already fighting in Belarus. It was there that something happened that changed my future service ... The regiment received a task for promotion. We left Mogilev in the evening. Either one of the locals brought the Germans, or their intelligence worked, but a squadron of Junkers swooped in. Everything happened so unexpectedly that people did not even have time to scatter at once.

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sides. In a word, the regiment was actually destroyed.

How many personnel were in the regiment?

- It's hard to say exactly. There were many people. This is a reserve regiment. It was intended to recruit personnel for the entire army. Soldiers and officers were sent there after being wounded, graduating from various schools, colleges, etc. So, when the bombardment ended, it was with difficulty that we managed to collect the remnants of the regiment. Someone gave the command to leave the road that led to Brest, into the forest. Why is still not clear to me. We went until two in the morning. Lost. And then a political worker comes up to me. It turned out that there were only two of us left from the officer corps.

"Where have the others gone?"

- Don't know. Someone was killed, someone just ran away. And this happened. Yes, in that environment, no one did not count anyone and did not even try to look for.

The political instructor takes me aside and says: "Since you have graduated from junior officer school, you know how to work with a map, a compass, bring out the personnel." But the cards are old. Night. unfamiliar forest. It is impossible to determine the location without reference to the area. How to be - I do not know. But I understand that some decision is expected from me. Highlighting the map with matches, he determined that somewhere nearby there was a clearing, which should lead us to at least some kind of road.

We go along this clearing, it smoothly turns into a swamp. I'm ahead. The water is getting higher and higher. The thought pulsates in my head: "Where are you going, I also found a commander." In short, when the water reached my chest, I thought that everyone would either be shot, or ... we must go to the end. And only after the water level began to subside a little, I realized that I had coped with my first commanding task. With the dawn we got out

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from the forest. It turned out that, having made a detour through the forest, we again went out onto the road to Brest and ... ended up in the rear of the retreating Germans. Overjoyed that they came out, someone began to offer to join the battle. A

how to enter, with what? The reserve regiment is soldiers, at best with a three-ruler. Since I was entrusted with command, I make a decision: do not take any action, but wait for our approach.

And so, as a reward for the fact that I withdrew the remnants of the regiment without losses, I was sent as a platoon commander to the 322nd separate army penal company.

- Was it an order for a division or for an army?

- By the army. Penal companies were formed under the armies. In this case, our 28th Army.

- Why did the choice fall on you - a junior lieutenant of small stature?

- The formal explanation was that Klyuchko, supposedly the most worthy, has experience in military operations, coped with a difficult task. But this, I repeat, is a formality. At that time, no one asked anyone: do you want or do not want. True, of the four officers sent to the penal company, only I arrived at their destination.

- Was the company already formed?

- No. The decision to form the 322nd penal company under our army was made. But only when the staff of officers was fully staffed did the rank and file from the Moscow prisons - Butyrskaya and Stromynka - begin to come to us. These were those who were allowed to atone for their guilt before Soviet society with their blood. The total number of the company was about 300 people. There were two officers for each platoon.

- The company received its baptism of fire ...

- In Belarus. After forcing the Neman River and breaking through the German defenses, the remnants of our company, man

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century 12, were surrounded. I had to take it out again. Moreover, the fighters completely changed my clothes, so much so that I looked like an ordinary shepherd. It was in this form that I appeared before the Smersh officer. We were interrogated for three days, until we found out that a penal company really took part in breaking through the German defenses in this area, that Junior Lieutenant Klyuchko was the platoon commander.

- Mikhail Grigoryevich, what specific tasks were assigned to the penal company?

- The main task was one: to provide a path to the offensive of a specific unit. And the methods of its implementation were different: from reconnaissance in force to the capture of one or another height or a specific line of defense of the enemy. It was necessary to lay a road in minefields. In general, we can say this: the command stuffed all the holes with the penalty box, they were called upon to correct the mistakes of the authorities, who sent thousands of fighters to certain death in order to find the enemy's firepower, because the life of the convicts was worth nothing. So they drove one penal company after another into the inferno ...

Were the Germans afraid of fines?

- You probably know, yes. After all, an attack by a penal unit is a psychological attack on people who are obviously sentenced to death. They couldn't retreat, they could only move forward. Imagine people who run chain after chain at you and yell at you with a good obscenity.

- It is known that neither "Hurray!", nor "For Stalin!" the fines did not scream.

- Of course not. They went on the attack with a checkmate. Yes, and how to shout "For Stalin, if he, in fact, sentenced them to death ...

- How did the former prisoners behave in battle? After all, they knew that there was practically no chance of staying alive.

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The penalty box did not shout "Hurrah!"

"Firstly, the Stalinist ideological machine worked through the brains of people in such a way that many considered it really an honor, at the cost of even their own lives, to justify the trust placed in them. You understand, I saw a lot in the war. And at first, too, I could not understand what made 17-year-old boys throw themselves, in the literal sense of the word, at the barbed wire of the German defense in the Astrakhan steppes. Idea? Faith in the correctness of the Soviet ideology?

Secondly, during the war years in prisons it was very difficult. And people preferred to go to the front, hoping that the worst that could happen would not happen to them.

- How many people did the company lose after each battle?

- I can not tell. I did not know how many personnel entered the battle and how many left it. The fighting went on continuously. Behind the first line of the front was the second. While one makes up for losses, the other continues the battle. And so constantly. Frontier abroad. I clearly remember the battles near Brest. They took skyscrapers. So there from the company almost no one was left alive. I was wounded and shell-shocked. My parents received a notice of my death. By the way, after one of the battles, a funeral was also sent to me near Rostov ... .

- But the replenishment was still carried out. Penal boxes are a special contingent...

- It was only during the formation of the contingent in the company was from former prisoners. In the future, replenishment came to us from parts of the army, the front.

- And for what offense could one get into a penal company from combat units?

- For different reasons. For example, for violation of discipline. They were also caught for desertion. There were cases and just funny. I remember one was sent to us only because the commander did not like what

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the soldier has the same beard as his own, which led to a conflict. With the issuance of Order No. 227, the commander could ensure that the objectionable soldier was sent to a penal company. In this regard, there were no problems with personnel in penal battalions and penal companies.

— Mikhail Grigoryevich, penal companies were formed and operated on an army scale. And the penal battalions?

- The formation of penal battalions, as well as penal companies, was provided for by Stalin's order No. 227, better known as the order "Not a step back!". It clearly stated: within the front, to form from one to three (depending on the situation) penal battalions of up to 800 people.

— It is known that penal battalions differed from penal companies in that they were formed exclusively from officers.

— Quite right. We have studied this order. It said that the penal battalions were intended to enable persons of the middle and senior command, political and commanding staff of all branches of the armed forces who were guilty of violating discipline due to cowardice or instability, to atone for their guilt before the Motherland with a brave fight against the enemy in more difficult areas of combat actions. They were sent to penal battalions for a period of one to three months. All servicemen were subject to demotion to the rank and file, their awards were taken away, which were kept in the personnel department of the front. The penalty box was given a special Red Army book. They were paid a financial allowance - 8 rubles 50 kopecks per month. Field money was not paid to the penalized.

- If up to three penal battalions operated on the front, then how many penal companies were then?

- I think I won't be mistaken if I say that there are several dozen. These divisions were beneficial commando

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vanity. On the one hand, their existence made it possible to somehow maintain the level of discipline. On the other hand, as already mentioned, they could check the correctness of the decision made. For example, it is necessary to take this or that boundary. How to find out what forces the enemy has concentrated there? And the order was given to the commander of the penal company: with the forces of one or two platoons, and sometimes even a company, to carry out reconnaissance in force at night. Whether the company suffers losses or not - this question did not bother anyone. The main thing was to prevent the loss of line units. In no official report of the Information Bureau has it ever been reported that this or that height, settlement was taken by the forces of a penal company or a penal battalion. It was forbidden! It was called a regiment, division, army. We were, and at the same time, we didn't seem to be.

- Judging by the number of personnel of the penal companies and penal battalions, the level of discipline among the officers was no higher than that of the privates?

That's why we fought for four years...

Let's get back to your company. How did you build your relationships with these people? After all, many of them were older in age and richer in life experience, and besides, they had gone through the school of prisons. How did they treat you?

- Only in a friendly way. There simply could not be any other relationship under those conditions. To show with my attitude that I was superior to them meant not to return alive after the first battle.

We had such a case. A young officer has arrived. In a new form, with gold epaulettes, which were then only introduced. Lined up a company. And he said something for a long time, pacing along the line. And they didn't like shagels at the forefront. And someone out of order shouted out, they say, finish p ..., I would feed better. The one in an instant

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the vein boiled up. Who? I'll shoot! Come out! The answer is mat. And criminals are a united people. The ranks closed. He pulls out a gun and shoots at the voice. The bullet went through the side of one, hit the leg of the second, ricocheted into the finger of the third. All three were taken to the infirmary and, as having atoned for their guilt with blood, were then sent to the troops. But this officer did not return after the first battle. And no one was particularly interested in what happened to him. When I asked my people, they only looked away.

There could be no other relations than respectful ones at the front. After all, by and large, everyone depended on each other. There was a strict law: in battle, you must support a comrade with fire when he makes a dash. If you do not do this, you will not live. Maybe that's why I lived so long that I did not try to flaunt either my position or my knowledge. On the contrary, he learned a lot from his soldiers. Vel and among the same prisoners came across people worthy of respect. I did not try to put pressure on them, proving my case. If I believed that it was necessary to do this and not otherwise, then I tried to convince them of the correctness of my decision. If they didn't agree, well, I didn't grab the holster.

— Have there been cases of refusal to go on the attack, crossbows?

- Were. But if someone could not get off the ground under enemy fire, then he was forced to do it by his own. And as for crossbows, they shot through a loaf of bread. So that the burn was not visible, because in the infirmary they always checked: a wound or a crossbow.

- And there were such crossbows?

- Passed.

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The penalty box did not shout "Hurrah!"

- Did the same former prisoners show habits from their former lives during the war?

— In war, a person is in extreme conditions, he obeys the laws dictated by the situation of hostilities. For example, I had a soldier as an orderly, sentenced to capital punishment three times, and more than once escaping from places of detention. It would seem that no one and nothing can fix this. And the war fixed it. When we passed through villages or stopped in them, he always had a few grains of legumes with him, gathered women around him and told them fortune. For this they brought him some food. Then he fed us with it. Food on the front line was really bad. You see, I did not steal, but earned!

But there were also those who broke down and, under the influence of alcohol, committed simply stupid misconduct. I remember that near Koenigsberg we stopped in one of the estates. Someone brought moonshine. There were those who wanted to drink. And not only among the soldiers, but also among the officers. Nearby was a divisional communications platoon. They went there. The commander was tied up and disarmed. They had fun until the guard arrived from the neighboring unit. In the morning, a meeting of the "troika". All participants were judged. The commander of our company, Captain Rysev, by the way, a resident of Kiev, was demoted and sent to us, but already a penal, the rest were tried.

— But officers were sent to penal battalions, weren't they?

- At that time, no one was looking at these formalities. By the way, soon there, near Koenigsberg, he died.

- Was the armament of the penalty box the same as in the linear companies?

- The same. At the front, they don't really wait when

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Savchin D.

You will be provided with one or the other equipment. We armed ourselves, for the benefit of captured weapons enough.

- The personnel of the penal companies were not particularly distinguished by their knowledge of the basics of military science. After all, they were thrown into battle without training.

- Certainly. By and large, these were live targets and at first they had a purely psychological factor of influence on the enemy. But the fact is that the combat situation teaches very quickly. And a person begins to understand that his life depends on the ability to wield weapons, to act competently on the battlefield.

Let me give you an interesting and, in my opinion, instructive example. A column of captured Germans was led through the positions of our anti-aircraft battery. Suddenly, a pair of Messerschmitts flew in. Our anti-aircraft gunners opened fire, but they could not hit the target. And then a German comes out of the column, approaches one of the guns and shows signs to the commander, they say, let me sit down as a gunner. He looked and ... allowed. The German pulled out his sight, probably a Zeiss one, put it on the gun and knocked out his own Messer with the first shot.

Or here is another case, near Kagarlyk. A German tank column suddenly appeared from behind the hillock. Neither we nor they expected such a meeting. Confusion in the actions of both sides was obvious. Only our gunner of one of the guns, an excellent guy, did not lose his head, he already had two orders by this time. He instantly deployed the cannon and hit the lead tank with the very first shot. So much so that the tower was simply thrown up. Whether the cars following him were in reverse.

But, unfortunately, there were other cases when confusion and negligence led to big losses. Near Elista, I remember, there was such an episode when, being in a forest plantation, one German the tank is almost

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The penalty box did not shout "Hurrah!

lyi battalion destroyed. Why? Yes, because when we walked through the Kalmyk steppes, it was hot, it was hard to go, and, of course, we were given anti-tank rifles, grenades, soldiers, so that it was easier on the march, we simply threw away everything "excessive". So, while we began to dig in, the German tankers, seeing complete confusion, simply began to shoot the battalion with cannons and machine guns. One, however, PETER member fired a shot in their direction. They sent the tank in his direction and simply rubbed it into the ground with their tracks. And if he had hit with the first shot, he would have saved his life, and many others. The ability to use weapons is a great thing in war.

- Mikhail Grigoryevich, when your unit went to the German border, how did the soldiers behave on enemy territory?

— What I remember is when they reached the border of Prussia, a large poster with the words: "Soldier, you are the judge!" and signature: "Ilya Ehrenburg". I don't think any explanation is needed here.

Our company, having been reinforced with tanks with special equipment for making passages in minefields, was sent to break through an impregnable, according to the Germans, defense in depth. As you know, she was overcome. After that, we went through the whole of Prussia - we did not see a single civilian. True, once, when they had already taken Königsberg, I remember we were marching through some village. And a German woman came out of the yard with a bucket. Believe it or not, but the whole company - there were about 40 of us - stopped. They looked at her as something impossible. There should not have been living Germans!

Today it may seem wild, but at that time many had their own scores with the Germans: someone's family died, someone from their relatives was taken to Germany. And this anger was so strong what could we

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Savchin D.

Indeed, in one breath, not only to reach Berlin, but if necessary, then to France. It was just pure hatred. Moreover, when passing through the same Prussia, we met our compatriots who were taken by force to work in Germany, released from concentration camps of prisoners of war.

One episode I remember for the rest of my life. There is a group of people in concentration camp clothes. It turned out they were French. It is winter outside, and they are in wooden blocks on their bare feet. And on the cobblestones there is only sound: clatter, clatter, clatter... And they go to the north, not to the west. We tried to explain to them that France is on the other side. And they look at us with a misty look and continue to walk. Terrible sight...

But in the same Prussia, we fought not only with the Germans, but also with the Vlasovites. And the fights were very heavy.

- Vlasovites, as you know, did not surrender.

"They might have given up. But they were simply not taken prisoner. And they knew it, there would be no mercy for them, so they fought to the end. In March of the 45th, near Pilau, they completely finished off the remnants of our company.

- Did your company take part in the storming of Berlin?

- No. We have reached the suburbs. And then we were put on the tanks of the army of Marshal Rybalko and hastily transferred to Czechoslovakia to help the Prague uprising. It was in Prague that the war ended for me.

- Were the penitentiaries awarded orders and medals?

- As a rule, no. As an exception, they were awarded only if they distinguished themselves in battle and were wounded. Then, after being transferred to another part, they could reward him as having redeemed his guilt with blood ...

Mirror of the Week. May 20-26. No. 20 (293). 2000.

Kuleshov V. SHTRAFBATYA

The commander of the penal company, Nikolai Smirnov, was avoided by bullets throughout the war.

At first he was called spoken as a joke, then it was no laughing matter. The young and unfired lieutenant walked in the front ranks under a hail of fire, and each time he returned without a single scratch.

Nikolai Smirnov asked to serve in the penal company of his own free will. According to secret order No. 227, penalized men were supposed to be "placed on the most difficult sectors of the front" so that they would wash away the guilt before the Motherland with blood. Most of them died in the first attack. Nikolai Smirnov reached Berlin without even receiving a concussion.

"Maybe I really am some kind of charmer," says Nikolai Ivanovich. "I am still sitting here alive in front of you, as if God was protecting me.

WAVED AT HIMSELF

- Nikolai Ivanovich, asking to fight side by side with the penalized, who were sent to the most disastrous places, is in itself a heroic deed. How did it happen?

— It was the forty-third year. By that time I had graduated from the Kemerovo Infantry School, and we were sent to re-



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Kuleshov V.

reserve of the 47th Army. We were hot, and everyone wanted to go to the front line - they felt that the war was coming to an end. Captain Knyazev, the commander of the penal company, came to the army reserve and said that he urgently needed four volunteers. I, like many other young officers, did not hear anything about it then. He told us what we would have to do and what contingent to work with. He defined the tasks as follows: breaking through the defense, reconnaissance in force, sorties at night for "tongues". Like a real Komsomol member, I rushed to the front and did not particularly think about where exactly I would end up. He just waved his hand and agreed. That's how it happened - you can say that I gave up on myself then. As soon as they arrived at the place, the first platoon was assigned under my command, and only later, when the commander died, I took command of the company.

- What were the penal companies and how did the fighters receive you?

— A company is like a company... An ordinary, at first glance, combat unit. But all the same, I felt some kind of tension — as if death was flying very close by. I was young, but they trusted me. These people have already been in combat before, but for some reason they were not released. Usually they were released immediately after the fight, they issued certificates with an official seal confirming that the conviction was completely removed. The penitentiaries respected me, obeyed orders unquestioningly, did not violate discipline. There were, of course, exceptions, but war is war. Sometimes I turned a blind eye to some deviations from the charter. Somehow a fighter comes running to me and reports that there is disorder in the platoon. My penalty boxers lived in a big house. I come to them and see the following picture: a laid table, at which about ten people are sitting - informal leaders. The platoon commander's assistant commands: "Get up! Attention! After

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Penalty

reports that the platoon is resting, and invites to the table. And what do you want me to do? I sit down with them and drink until the morning. In general, I tried to behave like a human with the fighters, and, probably, that is why I always had order in the platoon. It can be said that discipline was maintained by a cohort of these same leaders, and I was in control.

- Were you interested in what they were in the penalty box for?

I didn't ask, it wasn't accepted. They didn't even talk to each other about it. I didn't have any "cases" on my hands, but I know that they were imprisoned for murder, for looting, and for various trifles. As it was then: you stole a bag of flour - you are an enemy, you were late from the hospital or you passed the height - also a criminal.

- Were you not afraid to get a bullet in your back?

- There was no such thought. It all depends on the commander - how you behave, such will be your return. I talked to them like normal soldiers. Couldn't do otherwise. They fought bravely, no one turned back. There were legends about the courage and courage of the penalty boxers, but the past does not count in the war. One gypsy served with me, so he stole a horse from the regiment commander and sold it to the Poles for a bottle of vodka. When they found him, they demanded that the mare stand still by evening. He brought the horse back - he probably stole from the Poles now. That's what they came to me for. Another fighter was sent to a penal company for refusing to take up arms. Turned out to be a Baptist. They put him in front of the line, threatened to shoot him, but he did not. The political commissar and I thought about what to do, and came up with an idea. They identified him as an orderly, so he pulled out as many of our guys from the other world as not every Fritz shot. He always walked in the forefront and remained alive. Here is your faith!

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Kuleshov V. baptism of fire

- Do you remember the first fight in the penal company?

- This is not forgotten. In 1943, a major operation was being prepared to cross the Vistula. To carry out reconnaissance in force, it was decided to assemble a reinforced company of two hundred people, including my platoon. The penitentiaries were given the task of taking the "language". The sappers removed the mines, and after five minutes of artillery preparation we went into battle. Fear, of course, I have suffered, but pulled myself together and led his attack. They burst into the trenches, let's beat the German, then they rounded up one corporal and, as planned, went back. When the Germans came to their senses a little, they began to "water" us from all sides, to surround us. I had to go through. Of the two hundred fighters, about forty people remained alive then, and then crippled and wounded. I was just lucky - I still think about how it was possible to get out of such a massacre alive and unharmed. And then the general offensive began: my penal company participated in the liberation of Warsaw, Berlin, on the Elbe we met with the Americans.

But what about the NKVD?

— Actually, we were forbidden to meet with the allies, but, as you understand, we forgot about everything with joy - | whether. Huddled with them, took pictures for memory. I met an American who spoke good Russian. It turned out that during the revolution, his rich father immigrated from Ukraine to the United States. He told me to come in the morning for a photograph, but ... The political officer persuaded me not to do this - and rightly so. The next day, the NKVD began to summon everyone who had taken part in the "unauthorized meeting with foreigners."

"They say that penal companies fought almost with their bare hands. How were your weapons?"

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Penalty

- We were given machine guns and spared no cartridges. They said: "Take as much as you can carry." In addition, each was entitled to defensive grenades F-1 and offensive grenades RGD-33. They armed themselves in battle. The Germans then had faustpatrons. I taught my subordinates to shoot with them, but they were afraid of getting burned. I had to myself. They did not offend the penalty box, they understood that they were not tenants. They fed well too. The kitchen was self-sufficient: either we take a pig from the locals and slaughter it, or a cow. They dressed the penalty box no worse than the rest. I received replenishment four times. I remember once I went for a new batch of penalty boxes, so they were brought in wagons in their underwear. We immediately put them on, gave them weapons, set them according to their height and "by eye" appointed commanders and assistant platoon commanders.

Fought like hell

— They say that the Nazis were terribly afraid of fines?

"We had nothing to lose, so they fought desperately like hell. They went on the attack on the first command, and there was no such thing as sdreyfili, moved back without an order. Once we didn't get up, but then a machine gun hit us so hard that you couldn't raise your head. The self-propelled gun shied away at this target, and we, having thundered "Hurrah!", went on the offensive again.

- "For Stalin!", Probably, they didn't shout?

- Who yelled "for the Motherland!", And who with obscenities - there was everything. Now some people say that the fines were acting out. We did not have this: they firmly believed that they were fighting for their native country, for our common victory. I saw tears in their eyes and I know that they sincerely felt guilty before the Motherland and wanted to be rehabilitated at any cost.

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Kuleshov V.

- Did you have any favorites?

- My orderly was a good guy, we freed him from captivity. He suggested that he stay in the penal company. He was young, desperate. I took care of him, yes, apparently, I did not save him. I somehow look out the window of a destroyed house, and from there shines. I warned the orderly that the sniper was there, and he waved his hand and looked out. By stupidity, the boy died.

— Were commanders in penal battalions called “penal battalions”?

- They also called "Vanki platoon". I was a junior lieutenant, and they simply called me a lieutenant. It's faster, and in war there is no time to pronounce ranks. Jokingly, they called me a charmer. After all, so many young lieutenants died, but I was always lucky. Only his overcoat and trousers were shot through when in Potsdam he ran across the road for help to the tankers. My company was the first to enter this most beautiful city: there are several lakes around Potsdam, and we were ordered to cross them on amphibious self-propelled guns. Many of us died then. They fought against the Fritz for every house: they sit on one floor, and we on the other, spent the night - and let's shoot again ...

— Were there cases of desertion or other situations when you had to write bad references to the penalists?

- On our sector of the front, the war ended on May 7, 1945, so the last set of penalty boxes did not take part in the battles. We were given an order to fence off the state border. But my company was not allowed into Berlin: the locals panicked and, fearing bullying and looting, went to the Americans. In order not to heat up the situation, the command decided to place the penalty box in the forests. Twelve people misbehaved - vodka and alcohol drank - I took them

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Penalty

to prison in Berlin. On the way, they could easily kill me, but they didn't touch me! I handed them over, returned back to the unit, and there I already found out that my violators, it turns out, were released under an amnesty. It turned out that they went home ahead of me. And they write letters, crooks, saying, thank you, lieutenant, for all the good things.

- Did you meet the victory in Berlin?

- I will never forget this day - strangers hugged, laughed and cried. From the flashes of rockets, the sky burned with multi-colored lights, and we rejoiced like children. I was doubly happy because the day before I had found my father. He received a letter from home in which his mother wrote that a funeral had come to him. Already the second for the war, well. I started making inquiries and got a reply from the Lodz hospital. They wrote that they have a person by that name. I arrived at the hospital, and fell like a stone from my soul. I look at my father, but he does not recognize me. Of course, when he left, I was a snotty boy, and here an officer stands in front of him, his whole chest is in orders and medals. They hugged and kissed. I spent three days in his room. The head doctor got a good one - he brought us alcohol. As it turned out later, my father and I crossed the Oder together, stood on the same bridge, but somehow missed each other. Here it is, a war, even cruel in small things!

..Nikolai Ivanovich Smirnov was born in the village of Kontoshino, Kosikhinsky District, on December 2, 1924. He was drafted into the army at the end of 1942. He finished the war as a company commander with the rank of senior lieutenant, holder of the Order of the Patriotic War, GI II degree, Order of Alexander Nevsky. Awarded with medals "For the liberation of Warsaw", "For the liberation of Berlin", "For the victory over Germany" and others...

Altai Truth. 2004. September 17

Riskin W.

## SHOOT AND WRITE OFF TO BATTLE LOSSES

The penitentiaries had to atone for their guilt with blood. Or perish

A resident of Kyshtym, Stepan Alekseevich Yudin, is not a film critic, but his opinion about the series "Penal Battalion" is worth listening to: at the front, he commanded a penal platoon.

The war began on the Kalinin front. After the liberation of Kharkov, the 18th reserve officer regiment was sent for a break in a small village. And suddenly the command: "Platoon commanders line up!" A man came out to the lieutenant's ranks and pointed with his finger at two of them - Yudin, the starley with cavalry epaulettes.

So Yudin ended up at the head of a platoon of seventy fines convicted by a military tribunal.

## THREE MONTHS OF DEATH

Commissioner Smersh also took part in acquaintance with his subordinates.

"He cunningly got into his soul," says Yudin. - I talked to everyone about a past life, about a family, and then suggested: you, they say, look after Vasya - he is unreliable. And Vasya whispered about Petya. I was directly ordered to report on the mood

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Shoot and attribute to combat losses

and sign the reports with the pseudonym Stepanov. I reported one. I remember the last name - Belov. From the Smolensk region. Was under occupation. So he told everyone how the Germans fed him, rolled him in a car. I had to write. They came, took it away, and I never heard from him again.

Stepan Alekseevich's memory for surnames is remarkable. He remembers many: Yudin's platoon commander was senior lieutenant Frolov, convicted by a tribunal for rape committed in a liberated village. In the second replenishment, Captain Karpechin and Major Glushkov arrived. Before the penal platoon, the first commanded an autobattalion, and the second was the chief of staff there. Both were caught selling a captured car to a collective farm. And three others stole a pig from the general's pigsty. The verdict of the tribunal was ten years in prison with a three-month sentence in penal companies.

"Again, the film shows incorrectly that the penitentiaries fought for years," Stepan Alekseevich inserts another remark. "No one lasted more than three months. During this time, one had to atone for one's guilt with blood or perish. After being wounded, they were transferred to a line division, but their ranks were not returned. However, more often they died. When the defense was breached, a third of the personnel remained. And again I will say about this picture: there was no such thing as being driven into a minefield. Before breaking through the defenses, sappers always made passages, which were marked with white flags.

## OUTLOOK TO THE WATERMELON

Such passages were made not only during the offensive. Twice Yudin's group went to the rear for "language", and each time sappers moved forward. First raid

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turned out to be unsuccessful: they returned without a German and with losses. It worked the second time.

"We were ordered to move towards the outposts of the fascists," says Stepan Alekseevich, "entrenched on a high-rise called Watermelon. Moved two groups of 12 people. All are volunteers. Imagine, volunteers from the penalty box. The sappers removed the mines and cut the barbed wire. One group penetrated the rear and opened fire. The Germans in a panic began to deploy machine guns. And then the second group burst into the trenches, stunned two Fritz with butts. They dragged them along with the machine gun. In the ensuing battle, all the guards were killed. Then in the army newspaper "For the Motherland" they read a note about themselves under the heading "Bold Foray". It tells how a subdivision of the guards, junior lieutenant Yudin, destroyed more than 20 Germans in a night battle, captured two prisoners with a machine gun and returned to their positions. There is not a word about the fact that the penalty box took part in the night raid.

Stepan Alekseevich and I recalled another fragment of the "Penal Battalion", when former convict Glymov shoots a cowardly soldier. He asked the veteran if something similar had happened in his front-line practice. Sighing heavily, Yudin began from afar:

- You see, then there was such a practice: a report was sent to the headquarters for a penalty box who was seen in a serious misconduct. From there, an indication of the following content had already been received: "Write off for combat losses." It meant one thing - to shoot. I did not carry out the sentence itself. The soldiers did it. There was a case when one native of Central Asia refused to change the observer. When they tried to lift him out of the trench, he grabbed a rifle and aimed it at the commander, shouting: "Mine will shoot! In the morning they reported where

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follows. We received an order: "Write it off for combat losses!" I gave the command, and two soldiers dragged him down to the ravine. And there was another case when I had to make and carry out the sentence myself.

LEVA-KAPTENARMUS

And the former commander of the penal platoon, Lieutenant Yudin, told a story that firmly stuck in memory.

"They sent me a soldier. His name was Leva, he served as a captain in the hospital. Got caught stealing bed linen. So this Leva, during the crossing of the Southern Bug, lagged behind the first line of the attackers in every possible way. Again, the film incorrectly showed that the commander was the first to attack - only the last. We had to make sure no one was left behind. So this Leva kept falling down, as if he stumbled, and tried not to get up. I shout: "Leva, go ahead!" Does not react. He figured out his plan: he wanted me to leave, and he would drape to the rear. Well, I fired a burst at him from a machine gun.

It is probably incorrect to evaluate Stepan Alekseevich's act of that time by today's standards. Nevertheless, I asked him what he thought about the execution of the cowardly soldier.

- But how, - Yudin responded without much desire to continue this topic, - I myself walked over the corpses, and I myself could die at any second. Like, for example, my orderly Lykov, who accepted death for me. Why for me? Yes, because during the attack he was wearing my field bag, and I fled in camouflage. So the sniper mistook Lykov for the commander. They, snipers, first of all fired at officers and machine gunners. Don't stop a coward - everyone will run after him.

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After all, it was only shown in films about detachments. I have not heard of any detachments. Behind me were four messengers, two telephone operators and an orderly. That's the whole "guard detachment". But we were ready to meet any runner. And they knew perfectly well what it could do for them.  
run out.

## NENA LIFE

In the film "Penal Battalion" there is a fragment when the parents of a soldier shot for cowardice are sent a message that he died a heroic death. This was done in secret from the staff officers and Smershevites.

"There was no secret," Stepan Alekseevich shrugs his shoulders about yet another cinematic invention. "I prepared documents for both Leva and the guy shot in the ravine that they died in battle. Their parents have nothing to do with it. Maybe they have children themselves. So let them be proud of their fathers, and not be ashamed.

It is not easy, I repeat, to judge the past from today's positions. But it is probably worth trying to explain why cruelty was the norm, and the cost of sheets was equal to the price of a human life. And we must start from the fact that the interests of the individual in our country have always been brought in for the sake of unknown state interests, in the name of which millions died. And not only during the war. Stepan Alekseevich remembers very well the terrible famine of 1933 in Tataria. Entire villages died out from crop failure. So the 10-year-old Styopka with his grandfather Pavel Ivanovich, a full Knight of St. George of the First World War, went to more prosperous Chuvashia. They christened there - they collected bread crusts from wealthy yards. Then they sold the pieces to pigsties. The collected money was enough for a gun, with which Styopka, returning

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to his native land, went to the hare. So on the hare the Yudin family lasted until the next harvest.

- And before that we were dispossessed, - Stepan Alekseevich joins the topic, - they took away the house and the cow. Thank God, the matter did not come to deportation: my mother was prompted to write that my father was a participant and invalid in the Civil War.

Dekulakization was recognized as an excess, everything was returned to Yudin. Others were less fortunate: they were sent to Siberia or the Kazakh steppes. This, probably, is the answer to the question, where does the cruelty and consciousness of the worthlessness of human life come from. And since it is worth nothing, then it's not a pity to give it away, even more so to take it away.

Punishers bound with one chain were not only in the Soviet army. When the penal companies were breaking through the Yasso-Chisinau line of defense, they stumbled upon Germans chained to machine guns in armored bunkers. The fight between soldiers in different uniforms, who drank one bitter cup of rejection for all, was especially merciless. In those battles, a small handful remained from three platoons, about 15 people.

"And then we made a decision," says Stepan Alekseevich, "to justify all the survivors and transfer them to the linear units. The commander ordered tables to be put together right in the corn field, and the chief of staff, junior lieutenant Sasha Belousov, ordered to sit down and prepare lists, with which he then went for approval to a member of the military council.

I couldn't help but ask about one more delicate aspect of dealing with fines: wasn't Yudin afraid of getting shot in the back?

"I wasn't afraid," my interlocutor immediately answered, "because he knew the approaches to a person. He installed the same demoted officers. their assistants, squad leaders and nothing

stressed the difference

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Riskin V.

tsu between us. And with the soldiers... I had two Ukrainians. So at night they made moonshine from grapes, and in the morning they brought me a full flask. Well, others were not offended. And at the front, alcohol and shag are always valuable. They bring people together regardless of rank. And nothing is more valuable than trust, especially before an attack, which for many becomes the last.

Stepan Alekseevich came from the front with two wounds, three orders and with his wife Elena Mikhailovna. They knew each other for a long time, since childhood, because they grew up in the same village called Shershalan. And they went to the front almost at the same time. Only Elena Mikhailovna served not in the penal battalion, but in counterintelligence at the 15th air base of the Northern Fleet ...

Chelyabinsk worker. November 6, 2004

Swede E. SHTRAFBAT

"Documentary" film footage, known to everyone, about the encirclement of the Germans near Stalingrad, when the soldiers run towards each other across a snowy field, were filmed by cameramen later, with units specially allocated for historical shooting. They broke through the defenses of the Germans and closed the ring of the Stalingrad encirclement. They did not participate in the filming, as, indeed, in the Victory Parade on Red Square in Moscow.

I met many of these people later, when I was working on the script for the film Penal Boxes. Not everyone I managed to meet was ready to speak frankly about their past, about the "unwritten" pages of the war. I'm late for many.

I do not want to anticipate my heroes. How their fates developed in the war and who they were, you will understand from their monologues presented here to you. I will only note that those who spoke openly with me wanted these black pages of our front-line truth to become known to people.

I would be grateful if the veterans write to me: 119021, Moscow, Zubovsky Boulevard, 16-20, apt. 77.

Evgeny Shved, screenwriter 287

Swede E.

Military lawyer Alexander Alexandrovich Dolottsev:

"It's easy to talk now. Any student-lawyer will understand and condemn Yeshe. And then, during the war... In extreme situations, no other measure of punishment, except for execution, was given! Any other measure is deliverance from war and death, because, as a rule, everyone perished. We, too, prosecutors, tribunals, perished.

Stalinism manifested itself in attracting people under Art. 58, T.N. "anti-Soviet propaganda". And no one will reproach me for going over to the side of the enemy. In all countries, they are tried for treason, for self-mutilation, too. War requires brutality.

Of course, I remember my first sentence. In the neutral zone, an Armenian was detained while trying to go over to the Germans. The tribunal sentenced him to 10 years, but the front-line authorities did not approve. They said it's not serious. The case came to me. How to be? I am a judge. He spoke to the death penalty. That's how I remember the first death sentence: I read it, but my knees were trembling...

Sentences were met calmly. During the entire war, only one single one slandered the judges. He has 58-10 for counter-revolutionary agitation - the highest penalty. "Well," he says, "and you are assholes." Now, I think he was right.

Much is wrong with modern war films. She was much tougher. When we were bombed, guts hung on wires and on trees. Or a hat, or an overcoat. Especially near Kharkov, when we retreated, we were so thrashed! No one knew whether they managed to get out or not. Bombs are exploding from the right, from the left! Earth ho-dun. And we are back. Now do not understand the tragedy. We cried as we retreated. We thought to fight on HIS territory and that we were retreating only the first days ...

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penal battalion

Already and replenishment appeared, but we all continued to drive. From near Kharkov, where they fled: some to Stalingrad, others to Vladikavkaz. Where next - to Turkey, or what?

It's scary when an uncontrollable mass runs. Here both cattle and people are evacuated. They filled all the roads, preventing the troops from retreating. And the German flies, and shoots everyone from a height of 50 meters. Wherever you throw a bomb, you will hit everywhere. And we leave village after village without a fight. The villagers feed us, share the last piece! I eat that bread and I know that in an hour I will step aside and leave. But I'm silent! I don't say I have no right! That was vile. Just a betrayal against them! We know and we don't say. And we leave the people... If we tell them to run too, they will make the road difficult for us. How embarrassed and hurt! In front of people, in front of the elderly.

I consider the case: four people from the reserve regiment were preparing to go over to the side of the enemy. I ask. Explain that there was a conversation, but not specific. But in general, they, they say, incited such and such to this. Why wasn't he attracted? I call.

Four of them point to him, I also press, and he spins and spins. "Not by myself," he replies, "the senior lieutenant ordered me to conduct such conversations." - "Which?"

I'm calling this starley, detective. I take a subscription for giving false testimony, for refusing to give evidence. I read the testimony of witnesses. And he says: "I won't answer anything, this is our operational work!" I have already boiled! Parasites! Few of us are real traitors - not all of them fought in good faith, how many more ran over to the side of the enemy! But why make something artificial? Due to my inexperience and vehemence, I think: "I'll bring this matter

before

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Swede E.

the end!" No, I say, you signed a subscription, and I will be forced to issue a ruling on bringing you to criminal responsibility.

It turns out that they kept a secret officer in the reserve regiment, he worked for them. He was not sent to the front line for this. Will not "run" - they will send with everyone. So he was ready to come out of his skin. To destroy people - not yourself! Finds and encourages...

Oleg Pavlovich Budnichuk:

— They say in a patter that I am accused of looting. I tell you how it really happened. They say it doesn't matter. I tried to explain and they didn't want to listen. They don't give a damn - I have a "cart". I feel that it is a completely empty thing to defend oneself: not to break it. Maybe if I asked for something or held a speech ... I shrugged. They whispered among themselves and read out the sentence: seven or eight years, I don't remember exactly, with a replacement by a penal battalion. I am silent. I turn around, and a girl is sitting behind, and they tell her to prepare the documents.



A very pretty girl. And in the tribunal, she copied it clean - it turns out that they had the decision written in advance! All this happened within five or seven minutes.

Valery Ivanovich Golubev:

- I ended up in the penal battalion from the aviation school. There are eight rows of barbed wire - only the shadows behind it peep through. Ovchali station, near Tbilisi. The soul did not want to go there.

At the gate stood a huge fellow - "Ivan and a half." What I remember is that he has absolutely impassive eyes. As if fate looks at you indifferent

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with a look. This Ivan got used to everything, apparently, he was not the first year there, he commanded the gates. No mercy was to be expected from him.

For many penalty boxers, the war began immediately, as soon as they crossed the gates of the penal battalion. "Old men" hung out there, arranged a "check" on the new arrivals: those who allowed themselves to be undressed were undressed... This tribute was converted into money and, they say, gave a bribe to the authorities so that they would not be sent to the front. They were the same penalty box, but rallied, created a gang.

Slept under the open sky, on the ground. There were houses in several rows, but it was impossible to live in them. Imagine, even if bedbugs were collected from all over Europe and Asia, there would be three times less of them than in one house of the penal battalion.

The first night I had an attack of malaria. He suffered, then forgot. I woke up under a huge weight - a lot of clothes were thrown on. We were strangers, each for himself, and everyone took part in me. They could have slept peacefully on their pea coats or overcoats, but no, they donated it so that it would be easier for me! That was the first feeling: the satisfaction that I was among people. Alive...

A real penal life began: running to the toilet, running to breakfast, to classes too. Everyone is running. They fed like this: four spoons of corn porridge - one in the morning and one in the evening, and two in the afternoon, however, some mura was also added to them. Experienced people said that we were given a tenth of what was due. Be that as it may, our menu consisted of four scoops of food, unlimited sunshine, and good swearing.

Murders occurred every day, or rather, every night. Who had time to scream, who did it anyway ... Many people died: one lost in cards, the other lost

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whether. In the morning they piled the corpses at the gate. During the night, two or three corpses were collected, sometimes more, the pile was superimposed. Of the new arrivals in the morning, five people usually turned out to be dead. At first it was surprising, but then we got used to it ...

So a month passed.

We formed penal companies. But only battalions were sent to the front - three companies. They will pick up a train - 750 people - and forward. We were changed before leaving. Oath again. And we line up, to the march of the orchestra, with the general in front, from the camp to the station. By platoon, with an escort and dogs - on the German model - through the whole city.

Military lawyer Dolottsev:

"As a rule, we rarely shot deserters: if he is fit, let him redeem!" Self-mutilators were shot: not fit. To give him a prison would be just what he wanted. There were defectors, a lot of crossbows. More than you think! And more than we judged: they did not grab everyone, but only the obvious ones. I think the same number did not fall into the field of view of the prosecutor. Now we look at many things differently, but for such crimes - all the same, execution ...

Ivan Mikhailovich Bogatyrev:

- They came to the penalty area themselves. With documents and the verdict of the tribunal. My duty was to accept. Here he takes off everything: chrome boots, belt, team uniforms. He changes clothes and tells how he was convicted.

He rents me, that means, an officer's quarters and becomes a soldier until he atones for his guilt with blood. Or die and never return, or after a wound

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from the hospital comes to us to get his old uniform. He is forgiven  
Then.

Outwardly, the penalty box did not differ from an ordinary soldier: then the German could also find out that he was a penalty box. The Germans were especially afraid of the penalty boxes - the people were desperate! Went to everything...

Oleg Pavlovich Budnichuk:

"The flea farm" was how the local wits called Lieutenant Colonel Bulgakov's penal battalion. I was determined by specialty, to reconnoiter the firing points of the enemy, in the defense zone and in depth. I selected a few more people for my group, and three days later we put a card on the battalion commander's table. "Well," he says, "go to the dugouts and rest..."

The day passes - no one disturbs, the second - silence. Like at a resort. In the war - neither before nor after did he live like that! And so in this sanatorium-dispensary for seven days! Suddenly in the middle of the night they wake up: "To the headquarters!" And there the documents and certificates were already signed by Bulgakov, that he atoned for the guilt before the Motherland. With a certificate, they escort them to the storekeeper for dry rations: hurry! We managed to move only a kilometer and a half, as behind us there was a crash, noise, roar. Such a thunder stands, the devil knows what! The sky erupted. This penal battalion went into battle ...

The second time, when again in the penalty area, I again hit Bulgakov. He half-jokingly suggested: "Maybe you will stay with me? What difference does it make to a scout where to crawl on his belly at night, to carry "tongues"? So at least they won't be sent to the penal battalion from here ... "

The second time, when he returned from the penal battalion, he drank himself to death! For two or three days they pumped out ... "Take, - they say, - your own!" No, I say! Enough to go to the penal battalion endlessly. It is clear that this cannot be good.

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end, at least for me. Tickled the nerves, satisfied the ambition - and that's enough! Shoot me, I won't go on reconnaissance!

Military lawyer Dolottsev:

- They shot a lot. And how they shot! Later, even an explanation came that it was impossible to apply capital punishment too often and so unreasonably by the tribunals.

After Order No. 227, although we were afraid, we began to hold on. And before the order, they ran when they needed to, and when they didn't. Fear was needed to make people go to their deaths. And this is in the most intense battles, when counter-attacks, but it's scary to go, very scary! You get up from the trench - nothing is protected. Not for a walk - for death! Not so easy... I went, otherwise how can I judge people? Therefore, the apparatus of coercion, and the barriers, the detachments that stood behind. Run and get caught. Two three will be shot, the rest - into battle! Not for myself, for my family. After all, if they were shot, then as enemies of the people. And in the rear, the NKVD machine is already working: wives, children, parents - to Siberia, as relatives of traitors. Here you will think what is better: to surrender or not to surrender? And you will show heroism if you have machine guns behind you! Fear, fear kept!

As for us, we shot 25-40 people a month. It was me later, when they calculated it, I was horrified.

In front of the formation, not everyone was shot - explicit ones. With representatives from units and with new replenishment. And immediately a rally: "It's better to honestly lay down your head than to die from your own bullet like a dog!.."

Valery Ivanovich Golubev:

"It was hard, and not at all. We have lost the habit of walking, and here we are making transitions of 50 kilometers! Where

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I could fall down, lie down... I think it was a pure accident, I don't blame the guards: they brought me in the dark, they didn't see at night that it was a swamp. Halt. As soon as they sat down, the water began to come out. The convoy shouts - do not rise. So we fell asleep with a friend sitting, back to back. We woke up - waist-deep in water. And many choked and died. In the morning they took us to a dry place, counted, and went. The escort is evil - he needs to answer for us.

So we got closer to the front. I didn't pay attention to whether they were walking in a clearing or a field - the German began to throw mines. It's scary, but you can't run anywhere - a convoy. Who is joking, who is brave. But this is what surprised me, and even then, after many years, this picture is the most vivid of the penal battalion. We were walking, shaking (the shelling!), and on the edge of the forest there was a small hut - only pegs were set up, not covered by anything. Sitting among the soldiers. A soldier girl put her head on his shoulder, he plays the accordion, and they don't give a damn! And plays such motives! And neither she nor he sees any shelling. And they did not notice us, probably, as we passed by.

In the morning we were escorted and given weapons. I take off the grease and think: "What will begin now, my God! If then what were the fights But as a hand removed! Nobody and nothing. The killings were over, everything stopped in an instant.

Military lawyer Dolottsev:

- In the 18th army, I realized that they would put me in prison. I got in the way of Smersh when I acquitted Zadorozhny, and they immediately removed me.

Scout Zadorozhny was arrested on charges of keeping a portrait of Hitler and two leaflets. Article 58-10, "anti-Soviet propaganda". When I took

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The thing is, I had no doubts. And he admits: he kept it. Why did you keep it? I am an artist, he answers, I graduated from the Kiev Art School, and I kept a portrait in order to draw caricatures.

They published, he says, both in the front-line newspaper and in the army. After the war, I wanted to write a book of memoirs - that's why the leaflets.

During the court break, I was not too lazy, leafing through the filings, found caricatures signed "Hood. Zadorozhny, withdrew, issued a ruling on inclusion in the case. I found out what kind of spy he is. I went to the Germans, they say, to the elders in the intelligence group, even dragged an officer. Order of the Red Star. My soul turned to him. Well, then, a man visited the Germans in the rear, brought a "language", and he is an anti-Soviet? It was best for him to stay there, why come back?

Major Burtsev was an assessor for me, then a captain. Apparently, he felt my attitude, he says: "No question! It's clear to me - this is the enemy! Dodges - you never know what he is saying now?"

More experienced people in my place acted more cunningly in such a situation: the judge tried to return the case for further investigation, then it would not be returned to him. That's why they shipped it, so as not to get dirty - let the other one flounder! And he stays clean! To issue a verdict of not guilty is a very sharp, responsible decision, especially on charges of a state crime, and even during the war - you yourself will get caught!

We went behind the bushes - we had a conference room in the field, we decide. Is there any storage of anti-Soviet agitation? Eat! But in the law: "... For the purpose of undermining or overthrowing ..." Is there a purpose? Major Burtsev has already spoken. The second assessor, the captain-border guard, says: "It seems to me that he does not have this goal ..." Now I can express my opinion, I say: "I agree with the captain! Law

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pursues when only "with a purpose". He sat down to write an acquittal, and Burtsev wrote a dissenting opinion.

When I announced: "Justify!" - Zadorozhny did not expect this, he was shaking all over and crying. He waited for at least 10 years or he would be shot! Execution at the front is easy...

I explain to Zadorozhny his rights (and at that time it was allowed to release him only after three days, if the prosecutor did not protest), and I was already summoned to the chairman of the military tribunal. He is at the head of Smersh. Here is the power! The prosecutor is a lieutenant colonel, the chairman of the tribunal is a lieutenant colonel, and the head of the special department Smersh is a major general! Ratio how? Our chairman was a Georgian. All counterintelligence was mainly from Georgians, especially the leaders. Personnel there were selected not according to intellect, but according to Beria's devotion: "hammer fighters" who know how to break any person and get the necessary testimony! "What are you doing," says the chairman, "what the hell are you doing there? Why were they acquitted? You will be left without a party card! Went stink

Major Burtsev was a secret agent, he has already reported. They recruited everywhere. Later it was an instruction not to recruit judges. Everything we said, they knew.

A prosecutor's protest followed my verdict, the verdict was annulled, the case was returned back, but not to me. In a new trial, Zadorozhny was sentenced to 10 years in prison. 58th article in, the penal battalion did not go - they were sent to the camps. He did goof off.

I was still young, I was not afraid. Wrote to the Military Collegium. Now I would have thought a thousand times and, most likely, I would not have written it. And then I believed in justice! We were not taught: "Seize the innocent and imprison!" But at the same time, it was believed that the unreasonable acquittal of a person accused of state

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crime, political immaturity! And there is no trust in such a judge! work in the tribunal

Maybe.

At the next party meeting, the prosecutor "reported" that the judge had reached the point where he was ready to justify all the enemies of our Soviet power, to stop cases. This was not my first "acquittal" case. A little earlier, he stopped the case against a woman accused of treason. The crime was that she cohabited with a German officer. Here she is from the menu of the Motherland and smeared! She only cheated on her husband, but the special officers "blinded"! Why not "sculpt" if for 14 completed cases they received the Order of the Red Star. They have more awards for the war than military officers!

After the meeting, I remained, as it were, in isolation. We have a common dining room - counterintelligence, prosecutor's office and tribunal. I come, I sit down. If someone is nearby on a bench or at a table, he gets up and leaves. And they are silent. Azerbaijani Safarov and Senior Lieutenant Ovsyannikov were the only ones who spoke to me. In a word, he was in such a position. And then I decided to go to the head of the political department, Colonel Brezhnev ...

Valery Ivanovich Golubev:

- They didn't bring us to the front line - the Germans popped, a tank attack. And, apparently, there were people who were not shot. In short, our advanced started. Comanla: "Hold the front line!" Behind us is a detachment, and we, in turn, are a detachment at the front line. Didn't mow them down, no. They just put it in and that's it. They fired over their heads. And then their commanders raised them. And we have an accordion playing. They found it with the Poles, but the accordionist had his own. And all these things - fights, all sorts of skirmishes there - took place with us to the music.

Volunteers are called for reconnaissance in force. We thought

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with a friend, thought and ... chickened out! We decided to abstain. Twenty people volunteered. Gone. Four returned. And the task was not completed. They are picking up again. And always in such cases they promise that if the task is completed, the fine will be removed. Let's!

Leshka and I nevertheless decided to go. The task is to take combat guards. It was noon, twelve o'clock. The distance between the trenches is not too big, they did not wait for us at all. About thirty of us left. It worked out quickly and successfully. From fury, the men, to be honest, defeated the outposts. They managed to catch one, they brought it with them. But no one left the penalty area: we were removed from the front line, made liaison, stuffed somewhere, even sent to the economic platoon.

Oleg Pavlovich Budnichuk:

- The first time I got into the penalty area is anecdotal. I was just put in command of a reconnaissance company, and the soldiers decided to celebrate: here you, then, have a wake for the murdered commander, and a meeting of a new one. A cow was driven away from the partisans, slaughtered, roasted. Out of nowhere, lieutenant colonel Polyansky drives up in a jeep. He orders that a cow's leg be put in the car. I replied that I myself was still half a guest. He screamed and left. And after a while, a special department accused me of marauding for a cow. So I got into the penal battalion to Bulgakov for the first time. And the second... A young major came to us from headquarters to lead the operation. They said he was the nephew of the chief of intelligence. For orders, that is. I reported to him my plan to capture the "language" from the 204 mark - this is the task we received. He listened to me, rejected the plan and dismissed me as incapable.

perform a task.

Several days pass. The commander calls, does not look into the eyes: "The major left, fell ill. Not

Maybe

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carry out the operation. You can't replay, it's scheduled for today. You'll have to..." Yes, I say, I haven't seen the front line for four days already! Anything could change there! But there is nowhere to go.

Went. Of course, everything was prepared wrong. Only a clinical idiot could think of dragging 45 people through neutral! Fifteen each - a capture group and two providing. Naturally, the Germans discovered us. Clamped on both sides. True, we jumped into their trenches and fought back with grenades, but then we jumped out and crawled to our own. To cut off the Germans, they called mortar fire on themselves.

He regained consciousness in a hospital bed. A comrade in a white coat asks questions, I tell them. Doctor, I say ... "I'm not a doctor," he answers, "but an investigator from a special department. You will be judged..."

The tribunal judged: "What do you want to say?" I laughed. Everything was clear.

How many years have passed, but from this injustice the insult remained.

Ivan Mikhailovich Bogatyrev:

- The sites for the battle were given the most difficult. And the penitentiaries are desperate people, they went on the attack together. The shoulder blades are behind the belt, cuttings down, so they advised to cover the chest. And in full growth! They knew that they had to, and they went ... He will not run away, the penalty box. Rather, an ordinary soldier will run away. Either he will retreat, or he will surrender. And the penalty box - no, they didn't give up. Their commandship, orders and everything else were deprived, and they were left in the party. Membership cards were with them. They fought to the point of bloodshed.

Military lawyer Dolottsev:

- Yas Brezhnev was not familiar, we met briefly a couple of times on Malaya Zemlya. Told the gist of the matter

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clarified that a mistake had been made. He also reported about the letter to the Military Collegium with a request to claim this case and consider it in the order of judicial supervision. And my request was that before the return of the case from Moscow, my personal party case should not be considered. Because it is clear: now I will be expelled from the party, and then what? What if the sentence is overturned? I still had some hope glimmering .. I promised. Called. Ordered.

A month passes, the second went. As mail arrives, I go there! And there is no and no business. We were sitting somehow in August, already two months later, the signalman was yelling: "The Zadorozhny case." I jumped up, my hands were shaking. Grabbed, leafing through the pages. These lines were my destiny!

I see the definition of the Military Collegium: "The verdict of the army tribunal and the decision of the tribunal of the front are to be canceled and the first verdict remains in force."

I believed that I would! I jumped with joy so, I thought, I would break the dugout with my head! The joy was even greater than the medal "For Courage" on Malaya Zemlya. Grabbed the case and to the authorities: "Here!" Me,

I say, somewhere far away, otherwise they will put me in jail. And there will be evidence. Recognized, did not recognize - you will buzz at 58-10! I realized that if I stay here, I won't be able to live long. The circle is closed.

Ivan Mikhailovich Bogatyrev:

- The village of Redkino. And across the edge is the village of Voskresenskoye. He had to be occupied in the night battle. Our battalion, as a penal, always goes first in the forehead. The rest are on the flanks. There were already 200-300 meters to Resurrection. Lie down, waiting for the signal. Meanwhile, our tanks went along the edge of the forest. The German got up, hung up the "lanterns". We are at a glance. From a mortar at us. And that's all.

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Valery Ivanovich Golubev:

- A separate army penal company dangles along the entire front of the army. You are exhausted, you dig a trench, you would fall asleep at night, the command: "Rise!" — and march to another place. They went on the attack - "For the Motherland, for Stalin, they did not shout. Mothers all the way. This was "Hurray for the penal company. There was no time for Stalin.

Oleg Pavlovich Budnichuk:

- I'm sick, rheumatism twists. I often don't get up on Victory Day. I don't go to meetings in the division. And the penalty?

During the war, my father was the technical director of a military plant, booking thousands of people. It cost him nothing to attach his son, to keep him with him. No, I didn't keep it in my head.

Valery Ivanovich Golubev:

— Me under the tribunal for the case. A few solid "flights", they could easily have given a "tower", and I was six years old with a replacement. Sorry, I won't say why. I didn't want to live. There was a feeling that my future life was over.

One friend advised: it will be scary - move your big toe. I somehow remembered and moved. Wow, and the fear is gone, and a smile on his face. Tanks rod, and I have a smile on my face. I did not hope to live in my future life.

Military lawyer Dolottsev:

- Judged against their will! They were held by fear, but they believed in the idea! We believed that we must make this world revolution and live like a human being! Now the old faith is gone. What's left? Don't want

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be a prophet, but if there is a war or something like that — God forbid! "Believe me, we will not find anything else but to use threat and force to force people to fight!" And we will shoot! If it doesn't become 58-10, there will be another one. Nothing else is given - they will scatter. If it's a sin to take, let the party organs take it upon themselves too! They commanded us. I would be glad if the head of the political department supported me at least once. They just pushed! I will soon die, but I will say: until recently, I don't know why they interfered in this matter?

Ivan Mikhailovich Bogatyrev:

- I have medals "For Courage", "For Military Merit", the Order of the Patriotic War - this is from the front. Now the military registration and enlistment offices give every year. I have a lot of these - 14 pieces. I let my grandson play. They are still in a plastic bag. I don't wear it myself - I don't like it. They roar...

Motherland. 1991. No. 6-7

#### Lebedev B. TRUTH AND FALSE ABOUT PENAL CASES

Late in the evening of November 15, the First TV channel showed the documentary film "Feat by Sentence", which tells about the history of penal wards during the Great Patriotic War. Moreover, the TV crews told not only about penal battalions and companies that fought in the Red Army, but also about German penal soldiers, the so-called shadows of the Wehrmacht. By the end of the war, German penal units, which by the end of the war reached the size of a division, by the way, appeared in the German army two years earlier than in ours. Not only that, the authors of the film told the viewers the history of the penalty box, starting from the time of the Roman legionnaires and soldiers of Peter G. Several Soviet veterans were given the floor in the film. Some of them were penalized themselves, among the participants of the film was a veteran who during the war years commanded a penal company. The film also includes the story of a German who went through the war as part of the German penal divisions. How much what was seen and heard this late evening is strikingly different from everything that was shown to us a year ago in the false film "Penal Battalion"!

For the sake of truth, it should be noted that the television people, the authors of the new work of Channel One, would not be

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#### Truths and Lies about Penalties

ourselves, if in their work they did not try to kick the former system and the former power. So, they present their new work as some kind of major discovery, previously unknown to millions of people in the history of the Great Patriotic War, as a great secret kept by the authorities almost with seven seals, as something so secret in previous years. that almost no one in our country knew anything about it. It is not for nothing that they put their work under the heading "Guys of the Century". According to their comments, sounding from the screen, it turns out that the history of the penalty box is a great mystery. It's a good secret, which was known to millions of those who fought, which was read by the famous Order No. 227, better known as Stalin's order "Not a step back." The secret about which Vladimir Vysotsky sang throughout our country in the sixties. His voice came from thousands of tapes.

Documentary authors could not resist accusing the Soviet command of supposedly unjustified cruelty. So, this command, it turns out, sometimes sent thousands of penalists into the attack just to reconnoiter the enemy's firing points. Where did these thousands come from, if the command had only a battalion or a company of penitentiaries at its disposal?

The Germans could have done this, because the Wehrmacht even had a penal division No. 999. But for our current television figures, the Germans are almost the embodiment of angelic care for their own soldiers. And not only about them. But the mere fact is that, in contrast to our truly more humane system of punishing the guilty (according to which the maximum period of stay in the penalty box is three months or until the first wound), in the German army there was a system of indefinite stay in the penalty box and

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no wounds were admitted - the atonement of guilt by blood - speaks volumes. Not only that, those who especially distinguished themselves in the battles of the penalty box in our Red Army were awarded combat



awards. It is true that few of the penalty boxers survived.

But even with the above attempts by the authors of the new work to smear our past with black paint, their film can be regarded as a model of truthfulness in comparison with the dirty film concoction "Penal Battalion", which was shown to us on the eve of the sixtieth anniversary of the Victory. In the "Feat by Sentence" eyewitnesses tell us – and their story is supported by documents – that combat, as a rule, experienced, proven officers, who did not tarnish their officer reputation and honor in any way, were appointed as commanders of the penalty box, and who filmed the ordered and, probably, well-paid film villainy, the authors of the "Penal Battalion" assure the viewers that those commanders were appointed from the very same penitentiaries. In any case, the protagonist of their film, a demoted major, a penal Tverdokhlebov, commands a penal battalion.

Participants in the war, former penitentiaries, tell (and this is again confirmed in the documentary by excerpts from Stalin's order) that penal battalions were formed from delinquent officers, and penal companies from soldiers and sergeants, and if at the very beginning of their formation they and replenished at the expense of prisoners, then these prisoners, candidates for fines, were selected by the camp chiefs more strictly than today candidates for deputies. In the "Shtrafbat" they hang noodles on our ears: Tverdokhlebov's penal battalion is formed half of former prisoners - "political" and criminals, half - of the soldiers who have committed a fine. And just not

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a large number of battalion fighters are former middle and senior commanders, that is, officers.

Who among the NKVD dared to disobey Stalin's order by sending rank-and-file penitentiaries to the penal battalion? Indeed, according to the same Stalinist order, the commanders of the armies (pay attention - the armies) were instructed "to form within the army from five to ten (depending on the situation) penal companies (from 150 to 200 people each), where to send ordinary soldiers and junior commanders guilty of violating discipline through cowardice or instability, and put them in difficult sectors of the army in order to give them the opportunity to atone for their crimes against the Motherland with blood. Who is the smartest and bravest of movie heroes who decided to change the order of Comrade Stalin's People's Commissar for Defense? After all, according to the logic of the same authors of the "Penal Battalion", anyone could "snitch" where it should be that such and such improperly executes the order of the leader, sending ordinary soldiers who have been fined to penal battalions instead of penal companies. Or did the authors of the film, fulfilling the order, do not care what the battalion, what the company, what the private, what the commander, what the front, what the army? Or maybe they didn't even read the order?

In the Volodar-Dostalevsky series, there was no place for a single decent, honest, intelligent NKVD officer who commanded penitentiaries (by the way, why did the authors make them, Beria's subordinates, military commanders?): entirely careerists, outright scoundrels, bloodthirsty beasts, chicks with eyes. Could it be that Tverdokhlebov and his comrades in misfortune were so lucky, solely at the behest of the authors? And in the documentary, its participants, former penitentiaries, about scoundrels, tyrants and monsters who fell into the commanders of penal battalions

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Lebedev B.

and penal companies, they talk about rare exceptions, like those filthy sheep that spoil herd.

There is an episode in the "Penal Battalion" in which the soldiers of the blocking detachment shoot the wounded soldiers leaving the battlefield with machine guns. And again - a vile lie! Veterans from the screen say that there have never been any detachments behind them in battle. These detachments in the rear caught deserters, traitors, crossbowmen. And there was no need for them on the front line: those who got scared or betrayed the penalty box could be shot on the spot by their commander. In full compliance with the order. The veterans, direct participants in the events, are echoed by the authors of the documentary film story: not a single document was found in the archives stating that any detachment shot the penalists who retreated in battle. Why are the assessments of TV people of the same phenomenon so different? In my opinion, because its authors made their "Penal Battalion" to order in order to pour a bucket of slops on our past, on the Soviet government on the eve of the 60th anniversary of the Victory.

It must be admitted that there are really strong shots in the "Penal Battalion" - the final ones, when the credits roll on the screen, there is a list of 1049 penal battalions and penal companies that participated in the Great Patriotic War. But even these shots appeared on the screen with the same goal laid down in the film from the very beginning - to show the cruelty of the past system, the cruelty of the Soviet regime, to instill in people the idea that our great Victory was won almost exclusively by the blood of fines. Although, as the authors of "Feat by Sentence" noted, during the entire war only one percent of the entire composition of the Red Army was in the penal wards. But to conclude your response to two fundamentally different films about one phenomenon

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#### Truths and Lies about Penalties

I want a great war not with words about these films and their authors, but with words about real heroes. We must remember all those soldiers, including those who were penalized, who honestly fulfilled their duty to the Motherland, who died in the battles of the Great Patriotic War.

Soviet Russia. 2005. November 22. No. 152 (12763)

Plotkin G.L., Prishchepa S.V. SERIES "PENALTY"

The negative phenomena now taking place in Russia have not bypassed the mass media, including television. A characteristic trend can be traced here: against the background of a qualitative increase in the technical capabilities of shooting and editing, saturation of pictures with special effects, etc. there is a sharp drop in the level of end products. Rare exceptions only confirm the sad rule. The main reasons for this seem to be the lack of serious control over the quality of films, serials and programs, including historical subjects. A vivid illustration of the above is the series "Shtrafbat", shown in 2004 by the channel "Russia".

Involvement of well-known actors in the film and a large-scale advertising campaign were bound to lead the creators of the series to professional and commercial success. I must say right away that this task was realized - most of the audience liked the acting and the storyline. However, many people, including the authors of this review, did not enjoy watching it, since the film is a frank historical and heroic hack with a huge number of factual errors. Unfortunately, the series strongly resembles an awkward children's anecdote, where "underwater

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The series "Penal Battalion"

the boat in the steppes of Ukraine died in an unequal air battle. It is unfortunate that the creators of the "Penal Battalion" did not bother to familiarize themselves with the relevant military-historical and memoir literature, thanks to which they could have avoided many factual errors and inaccuracies. Even worse is that the persons responsible for the creation of this "masterpiece", in the first

In turn, the scriptwriter, not only does not admit their obvious mistakes, but on the contrary, they consider the wave of criticism that has fallen on them to be "nitpicking idiots". In our opinion, this is a pathological disrespect for both the viewers of the series and the history of their country. It remains to be hoped that in the future this group of authors will not "make us happy" with their pseudo-historical crafts.

## GENERAL REMARKS

The most serious mistake is the confusion of two types of penal units - battalions and companies, which had significant differences. In the series, we are talking about a penal company, misunderstood called a battalion.

Another significant mistake was the appointment of a convicted officer as the commander of a penal unit. This is impossible for many reasons, especially by the summer of 1943, when the film takes place. It is also worth mentioning the inexplicable absence of other regular (permanent) officers and sergeants. With a variable composition, too, not everything is in order. It was mainly servicemen who were sent to penal units; former prisoners could end up in companies, but not in battalions; but the appearance of former convicts under Article 58 there, and even mixing them with criminals, is the result of the violent imagination of the authors of the series.

Against the background of these mistakes, the uniforms and equipment shown in the series stand out for the better.

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Plotkin G.L., Prishchepa S.V.

nie. The penalty box wears tunics of both the old and the new design, as it was in reality; moreover, the soldiers' tunics, in contrast to the commander's ones, do not have chest pockets, which is true.

A large number of servicemen in boots with tapes also corresponds to the realities of the third year of the war, only the lower edge of the tape should be wound over the upper edge of the boot, and not inside it, as shown in the film.

It is incomprehensible the almost complete absence of outer clothing (overcoats or quilted jackets), which even in summer is necessary for soldiers who are constantly under the open sky.

On armament, the comments are more significant. The only regular weapon in the penal company could be a three-line rifle with a bayonet (there are no bayonets in the film at all). Automatic weapons, especially machine guns and anti-tank rifles, as shown in the film, were not issued to a variable composition of companies. For Tverdokhlebov's penalists, such weapons could appear only after the first battle, as trophies, or they were picked up on the battlefield from the dead. Usually, such "amateur activity" was not forbidden by the authorities.

Artillery batteries could indeed be temporarily attached to penal units to reinforce them, but penal artillery units never existed!

## 1st SERIES

Both the Wehrmacht officer and the SS Sturmbannführer are completely missing twisted silver cords on their caps.

The encircled soldiers gathered in the forest call the numbers of their units; they are all taken at random. Especially

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The series "Penal Battalion"

"32nd motorized rifle corps" sounds wildly - there have never been such in the Red Army.

On the road is a tank column of the Wehrmacht. The undercarriage of domestic post-war tanks is striking. It is clear that it is difficult to find genuine German equipment in working condition, but shooting from a different angle would mask this shortcoming.

The decision to appoint Tverdokhlebov as a battalion commander is made by an NKVD officer in the camp, although the penal units were subordinate to the front authorities, and only they decided all issues related to them, including personnel.

## 2nd SERIES

Penal fighters in the forward position move freely in and out of the trenches, having previously randomly scattered boxes of ammunition everywhere. Enemy same no sign of life

does not submit.

NKVD Major Kharchenko should arouse the viewer's suspicions from the very beginning as a candidate for the main villain in the film. And indeed, starting from the appearance of THIS "special officer" in the frame, his relations with the command of the division are shown completely wrong. He could not give any orders to any sappers, as well as to other commanders of combat units, even penal ones, especially through the head of the divisional commander. The manner of constantly wearing in the rear, and even on the front lines, a peacetime cap of bright blue-red colors also raises great doubts (further on in the film, all NKVD officers do this in general).

The pyrotechnicians did a good job, showing the work of artillery, but the explosions of anti-personnel mines turned out to be too strong. But lethal action

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Such mines, equipped with a 75-200 g thick saber, are based on fragmentation, and not on high-explosive action.

The division commander, Major General Lykov, directs the battle using the phone and on the map, without leaving the dugout, just like his political officer. In fact, they were obliged to observe the course of the battle from their command post, and at some points to visit the front line - and these were not wishes, but strict wartime requirements! A half-empty dugout with a lone telephone operator in the corner is the headquarters of a bath and laundry detachment, not a combat division (just in case, we recall: a rifle division is at least three regiments of three battalions each, an artillery regiment, and even reinforcement units). There are no headquarters officers, no signalmen, no messengers - and without them, any headquarters is unfit for combat.

About the work of detachments. First of all, they did not "herd" only the penalty parts. Blocking the main routes leading to the rear, they detained all those following from the front line and found out who was leaving their positions and why, identifying deserters, arbitrators and enemy agents. And these detachments were located approximately on the line of regimental rear areas (1-1.5 km from the front line), and not directly behind the head of the combat units, as shown in the film.

## 3rd SERIES

Even if we assume that after the capture of the German trenches, the penal soldiers massively change into trophy uniforms, wearing them with uncut enemy insignia and Nazi symbols is absolutely unrealistic.

When shooting a guilty fighter, it is difficult to get rid of the impression that between Tverdokhlebov and

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The series "Penal Battalion"

Glymov had agreed everything in advance. Otherwise, why exactly at that moment did the "company commander" have a trophy pistol in his belt, which was not there before and will never be after?

#### 4th SERIES

The picture of the attack looks ugly: the battalion commander Tverdokhlebov runs ahead, and the whole battalion moves behind him in an uncontrollable crowd.

In the gap formed by the penalists, only one kilometer wide, that is, shot through by all types of weapons, General Lykov decides to introduce an entire tank corps. But such decisions are not within the competence of the division commander, and such a large military formation (2–3 tank brigades, a motorized rifle brigade, 2–3 artillery regiments and several separate battalions and divisions) could not physically fit on such small area.

The story of sending a reconnaissance group from the personnel of the penal unit to the rear of the Germans is very doubtful. The maximum that could be entrusted to them was to take the "language" from the first trench. The group is formed from completely heterogeneous elements (criminals, political, demoted officers), which immediately leads to the brewing of a conflict. Sending such a group behind enemy lines would be madness.

In the hospital, when our Soviet bullet is removed from Zuckerman's leg, this is precisely what becomes the reason for the accusation of crossbow. However, the real signs of a "shot at home" are completely different, and the military doctor was supposed to know them, since he was obliged to report such cases on command. As for the bullet, captured weapons were used in this war by both sides.

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Plotkin G.L., Prishchela S.V. SERIES 5

The unruly "battalion commander" looks strange, dressed in old and worn out uniforms and forever unshaven, nevertheless driving around in his personal "jeep".

#### SERIES 6

A machine gun opens fire from the turret of a burned-out German tank. Putting a machine gun inside a fixed turret means deliberately limiting its sector of fire. During the war, tanks knocked out in no man's land were indeed often used as firing points, but in this case a trench was dug under them, and a machine gun was installed under the tank. But not only the enemy suffers from dementia: our penalists crawl towards the tank exactly from where the machine gunner is scribbling. They don't know how to outflank him.

After the treatment of the unfortunate Zuckerman, he is again sent to the penal battalion, which is contrary to all regulatory documents - he must certainly be released as "redeemed with blood."

A dejectedly wandering hungry penal battalion in the middle of the road is given the task of occupying the city of Mlynov by some major. Suppose this is a communications officer or one of the division headquarters officials, but he is obliged to introduce himself, give his last name and position.

#### SERIES 7

During the period under review, the Soviet tank battalion as part of a tank brigade consisted of 21 tanks (a separate battalion - 36 tanks), and the German one - 76 (not 50).

tanks. However, the smaller composition of our battalions was not due to the desire to increase the number of staff posts. Different organization of tank troops, tactics of their actions on the field

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The series "Penal Battalion"

combat and the principles of interaction with other branches of the armed forces - these are the real reasons for the different numbers of military equipment.

#### SERIES 8

The Tverdokhlebovsky "battalion" again receives an uncharacteristic task for defense. The assigned anti-tank battery comes from the army reserve. But this is not 1941, when almost the chief of the General Staff distributed each such weapon! As for the anti-tank rifles issued to the penalized, how much use will they be if people were not taught how to use this specific weapon?

Tverdokhlekhov pays no attention to equipping the defensive position. As a result, the firing points of machine guns and anti-tank rifles are ugly, with practically no parapets, and there is no need to talk about camouflage. The passages of communication to the rear are not open, therefore, when you have to retreat across an open field in front of the enemy, the penalty box suffers very serious losses that could have been avoided.

The composition of the German tank division (500 vehicles!) Is overestimated by Lieutenant Colonel Belyanov at least twice. How did we win the war with such officer cadres?

The form of addressing the priest "holy father", constantly used by the fighters from this series, is not accepted in the Russian Orthodox Church. They should have addressed themselves as "father Michael" or "father". Of course, the soldiers of the Red Army might not have known such subtleties, but by the 11th episode, Father Mikhail could have explained this to them.

#### SERIES 9

This time, the group of authors does not even consider it necessary to appoint a new "battalion commander" from the penalty boxes.

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somehow explain - it seems like the viewer is already used to it! When a signalman appears in the frame close-up, it is clearly seen that the edging around his shoulder strap is not black, as it should be, and not even crimson (infantry), but for some reason red - artillery.

#### SERIES 10

The march of the penalty box for "languages" raises many questions. For example, why is a group of already minimal size for such a task also divided? After returning, it becomes clear that this was necessary to create a completely far-fetched story with the non-rewarding of the Ingush warrior. Drawing a parallel, one can come to the conclusion that for an enemy ship sunk by a submarine, only one torpedo sailor, who directly fired a shot from a torpedo tube, should be awarded.

#### SERIES 11

Again, some ambiguity with the term of stay in the "battalion": one (Tverdokhlebov's new driver) was "soldered indefinitely" - how is this to be understood? The other one (Zuckerman) was wounded for the second time, this time "honestly", but he was again returned to the penalty area.

And now the fantasy of the authors of the series reaches its apotheosis: having gathered together three battalions and two artillery divisions, Tverdokhlebov, without a shadow of a smile, begins to be called the "commander of the penal brigade."

During the felling of trees and tying rafts near our shore, the Germans do not provide any resistance. As soon as the rafts leave the shore, a hurricane fire begins...

Sergeant. No. 30 (1/2005)

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